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KAMENETZ-PODOLSK

a memorial
to a city annihilated by the Nazis



edited by Leon S. Blatman

New York, 1966

KAMENETZ-PODOLSK

A Memorial to a Jewish Community

Annihilated by the Nazis

in 1941

Editor—Leon S. Blatman

PUBLISHED BY THE SPONSORS OF THE
KAMENETZ-PODOLSK MEMORIAL BOOK

NEW YORK, U.S.A.

1966

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From The Editor . . .



Leon S. Blatman

Since the end of the Second World War, Memorial Books dedicated to cities annihilated by the Nazis, were published in Israel and in other countries. In 1953 this editor was approached by the Israeli representative of the "Encyclopedia of the Diaspora" to edit a volume "Podolia," as a memorial to all the cities and towns of that region. For many reasons the project was abandoned.

In 1965, in Israel, a committee of people originally from Kamenetz-Podolsk and surrounding towns published a memorial book in Hebrew, dedicated to their home towns. When the book was received by Kamenetzer in New York, it became obvious that too

few could read the book in Hebrew. The idea of issuing a memorial book "Kamenetz-Podolsk" in English was revived. The main reason was to give the children and grandchildren of the compatriots from Kamenetz-Podolsk a chance to learn how their ancestors lived before coming to America, a chance to read about the history of Jews in Kamenetz-Podolsk before, during, and after the Russian Revolution of 1917, about the life there under the Soviets and, finally, about the destruction of Kamenetz-Podolsk by the Nazis.

Originally it was planned to issue a book of about 500 pages, well illustrated in color, in a deluxe edition. Unfortunately, the response to our appeal for funds was such, that the editor himself had to do all of the writing and all of the work connected with the publishing of this book. The lack of funds made it necessary to revise the book to its present size.

I wish to single out a few people for special thanks in making this book possible. In the first place, thanks go to each subscriber

and to the following larger contributors for memorial pages:
M. Kaplun, Mrs. Sylvia Blatman, S. Drachler, M. Schleifman, A.
Glassman and I. Wolfson.

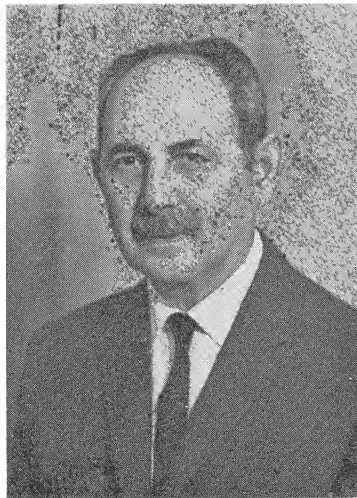
Special thanks to my wife, Sylvia, who was the first to encourage me in undertaking this work and was generous in letting me spend our few free evenings in preparing the book for publication.

Leon S. Blatman, Editor

"KAMENETZ-PODOLSK"

by

I. A. BAR-LEVY
(Weissman)



I. A. BAR-LEVY

AN EDITED AND FREE TRANSLATION FROM THE HEBREW
BY LEON S. BLATMAN

It is the duty of our generation to build monuments to the memory of Jewish communities destroyed by the Nazis. The city of our birth, Kamenetz-Podolsk, is memorialized by this book.

A memorial book "Kamenetz-Podolsk" in Hebrew was published in Tel-Aviv, Israel, in April 1965, by the following committee:

*I. A. Bar-Levy (Weissman)
Uri Michaeli (Pressman)
W. D. Rechter
Ben-Zion Shilmover
Chaim Schrig (Schreiberman)
Jacob Sharir (Shreier)*

Podolia

The region Podolia (Gubernia) of which Kamenetz-Podolsk is its main city, occupies 3610 square viersts. (A vierst is about a kilometer). To the north and east of Podolia were regions which bordered with Great Russia; to the west was former Austria (Galicia) and to the south, Bessarabia (now Rumania). The river Dniestr separates Podolia from Bessarabia for a distance of 415 viersts. From the side of Podolia a number of rivers flow into the Dniestr, among them the Smotrich, Ushiza, Liadora, Morapa. The river Boog separates Podolia from the Kiev region; its tributaries are Googik, Ikra, Rub, Snibuda. All are on the Podolian side.

The earth in Podolia is rich and black. In some parts in the south the earth contains lime, phosphates, building stones and other minerals. The climate is warm; the average temperature around Kamenetz-Podolsk is 86 degrees. Podolia had a population of 3,544,000 with only 247,000 city dwellers. The density of the population—96 per square vierst—was the highest in European Russia. The majority of the population, Ukrainians—81%; the Jews comprised 12%; the rest were Russians, Poles, Moldavani and others.

Podolia had 17 cities, 120 towns and thousands of villages and hamlets. Podolia is mainly agricultural, producing all kinds of grain, vegetables and fruits. Among the industries, sugar refineries with 293 such establishments occupied first place. There were many flour mills, grain distilleries, wineries, textile mills and other factories. The countryside produced not only enough for the population but also for export. The main products of export were grain, fruits, flour, sugar and alcohol.

In 1905 export amounted to 3,037,000 rubles. Transportation in Podolia consisted of 1213 viersts of railroad



Zionist students organization "Kadima" in Kamenetz-Podolsk



**Musical Club "Kadima" in Kamenetz-Podolsk
in 1917**

tracks; other transportation was by boats, mainly on the Dniestr and on paved and unpaved roads.

2,168 schools, including 119 High Schools, with 16,000 students comprised the school system of the region. The region, Gubernia, was divided into 12 districts.

The settlement of Podolia goes back to a very early era. According to the Greek historian, Hiroditus, different tribes were known to live in Podolia before the Fifth Century, B.C. When the Roman Emperor, Adrianus, conquered Germania and Rumania, Podolia also fell under his rule. After that, for about five hundred years, Podolia was ruled by different barbaric tribes. In the beginning of the Sixth Century, A. D. Slavic tribes drove out the natives of Podolia and settled there.

From the 14th Century until the second division of Poland in 1793, Podolia was under the jurisdiction of Lithuania, Poland, Turkey, and Russia.

In 1793 Podolia, as well as other districts, was annexed by Russia and remained under the czars until 1917, when it was declared a part of an independent Ukrainian state.

There is a division of opinion on when the Jews first settled in Podolia. Some historians believe that Jews came to this part from Poland or other Western European countries after the Exodus of Jews from Spain. Others are of the opinion that Jews came to Podolia from the Crimea or from the land of the Chosars on the Volga. Jews may have come from Palestine by way of Sophia to Kiev, and when driven out from Kiev by Vladimir Monomach in 1120, settled in Podolia. There is evidence that in 1220 Podolia had Jewish settlements. In those early days, Jews were engaged in business, leasing land for agricultural purposes, and had a great number of craftsmen and tradesmen. During the 30-year war (1618-1648) many German Jews came to Podolia. Among them were Rabbis and families renowned for their knowledge of the Scriptures. During the reign of Lithuanian and Polish princes over Podolia, the Jewish population there grew and was prosperous. In general, Jews in Podolia at that time were treated better than their brothers in other lands. With improved economic conditions, the Jews devoted their spare time to the study of the Bible and Talmud and produced a number of Rabbis and Scholars.

The Rabbis of Nemerov, Tulchin, Bar and Megbish were famous throughout all of Podolia.

But this was the calm before the storm. The situation was changing for the worse. The Ukrainian Kozaks started a revolt against their Polish landlords, but the victims were the Jews. The bands of Ataman Bogdan Chmelnitzky were murdering Jewish men, women, and children, most of them innocent of any crime against the Ukrainians. There was a small number of Jews who did the dirty work of oppression imposed by the Polish Pani (landlords). The Polish landlords treated the poor Ukrainian peasants miserably and even prevented them from freely practicing



**Zionist Youth Organization "Hatchia" in Kamenetz-Podolsk
in 1920**

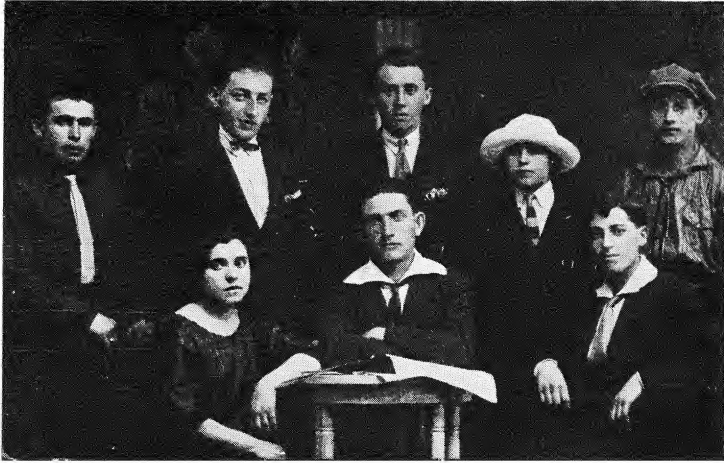
their religion. The Polish Pani hired Jews to enforce their rules. As a result of the revolt entire Jewish communities were annihilated by the Ukrainians. Many Jews were forced to convert to Christianity. Others succeeded in escaping across the borders to foreign lands. Thus the Jewish population of Podolia was reduced to a fraction of their former numbers.

During the Seventeenth Century, Jews in many lands were looking for a Messiah, who was about to come and rescue the "Chosen People" from their miseries. The Messianic movement spread through Podolia, bringing hope into the hearts of the believers. Later, it became clear, that the Messianic movement, as represented by Shabsa Zvi and Jacob Frank, was false and against the Jewish religion. Life of Jews in Podolia, as elsewhere in the diaspora, was completely disrupted. Only by the middle of the 18th Century a change came over the Jews of Podolia, when a

new religious movement, Chassidism, was started by Israel Bal-Shem-Tov.

A new era, the so-called "enlightenment" was brought about by Western European Jews. In the 19th century, it penetrated and took roots in Podolia. It brought an end to the cultural separation of Jews from the surrounding world. Jews began to learn modern sciences and languages, read world literature and participate in the cultural life of the nations among whom they lived. Jewish authors in Hebrew, Yiddish and Russian wrote about secular subjects, spreading the "enlightenment" among the Jewish masses. Formerly Jews studied only the Bible, the Talmud, and commentaries. Now, they read also modern literature. Among the writers of the "Enlightenment" era in Podolia were Isaac Satanov, Menachim Mendel Lapin, author and translator, Ben-Ami (Mordecai Rabinowitz), who wrote in Russian, and many others. At first, just a few individuals here and there learned a foreign language, such as Russian or German, and enjoyed the knowledge of the modern times. The talented among them were translating books into Hebrew and Yiddish. Before long, Jewish authors brought out original secular books in Yiddish and Hebrew. Others wrote in Russian, because the numbers of Jews learning the Russian language grew larger and larger. This change affected the educational institutions among the Jews. Besides the old "Cheder" and "Yeshiva," where only religious subjects were taught, new modern Hebrew schools came into being. There, Hebrew was taught by new methods and the curriculum included other subjects that would give the students a rounded general and Jewish education to prepare them for a life in the new surroundings.

With the "Enlightenment" came new ideas about the return to Zion. Religious Jews for centuries prayed for return to Zion and wished each other to be in Jerusalem by next year. During the 19th century groups known as "Lovers of Zion" were organized in many lands of the



**Chalutzim from Kamenetz-Podolsk on the way
to Palestine in 1922**

diaspora. These groups were doing something for actual return to Zion. Later they were transformed into branches of the Zionist Organization.

Modern Hebrew literature was full of encouragement for the Jewish youth to return to Palestine to try to rebuild the ancient land. By the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th, the pro-Zionist literature included the writings of many authors, poets, and philosophers. Among them were many from Podolia, such as I. Berdichevsky, Prof. Echaskiel Kaufman, Eliesor Steinman, Prof. Zvi Sharfstein, S. Z. Blank, Abraham Rosen, Mordechai Michaeli, M. Poznansky, David Fogel, Isaak Schnor, S. Span, B. Kruha, and A. Ashman.

Kamenetz-Podolsk

From the history of Kamenetz-Podolsk, we know that the city was in the 14th century under the reign of the Gadamini of Lithuania. From the end of the 14th to the end of the 18th century the city belonged to the Poles. At one time in the 17th century the Turks took over the city and later were driven out. After 1793 Kamenetz-Podolsk belonged to Russia.

Historical data indicates that Jews were there in 1447. At times, Jews were driven out of the city, but Jewish settlements remained in nearby towns. The economic and political status of the Jews influenced the economy of the city. At one time Jews were allowed to own only old houses. They were prohibited from building new houses and could live only in the suburbs (Folvarki). Eventually, Jews could live in every part of the city, own and build houses, new or old.

The census of 1893 showed that the population of Kamenetz-Podolsk consisted of 40,134 persons, among them Ukrainians 32%, Jews 50%, Poles 16%. Before the 1st World War the population grew to 60,000, half of them Jews.

The old city of Kamenetz-Podolsk was built on an island surrounded by the river Smotrich.

On the other side of the river Smotrich were the suburbs Polski Folvarek, Russki Folvarek, Podzamcha, Zinkovetz, and Karvasari. By crossing the New Bridge, built in 1870, one could reach the suburbs—the Novy Plan, Russki Folvarek, and Polski Folvarek. By crossing the Turkish bridge, built in the 17th century, one reached the Padzamcha. This last suburb derived its name from the fort (samok) built by the Turks. There were other roads, paths, and smaller bridges by which the suburbs could be reached.

In the early years of the Polish reign the suburb Karvasari served as the Ghetto of Kamenetz-Podolsk. The

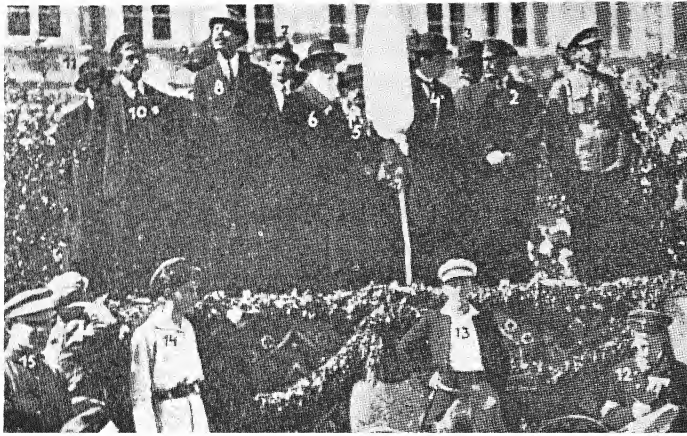


Palestine Week Celebration in Kamenetz-Podolsk in 1918

Jews were allowed to leave the Ghetto during the day to go to work in the city, but had to return in the evening and be locked up until the next morning.

In the 19th century, when Jews were free to live in the city and comprised 50% of the population, the Karvasari became the home of the very poor Jews. The census of 1847 showed only 752 Jews living in the Karvasari; in 1897 there were 720 persons. When Kamenetz-Podolsk was proclaimed the capital of Podolia (Gubernsky Gorod), Karvasari lost the status of a town and became a suburb of the city.

The city had only stone houses of 2, 3, and 4 stories with stores and offices on the ground floor facing the streets. In the center of the old city were a few taller buildings of which the police station was the highest. Above the police station was a tower, serving as a lookout station for the fire department. The city clock, seen from quite a distance, was also housed in this tower. On both sides of these municipal buildings were small parks with benches for people to rest. These parks also served as the meeting place for tradesmen looking for jobs. Besides these little parks, the city had large parks, near the bridges; one known as the "New Boulevard" and the other as the "Old Boulevard."



**Celebration of Balfour Declaration in Kamenetz-Podolsk
in 1920**

There was a third park, stretching from the new bridge to the Ruski-Folvarek and known as the "Path" (Dorojka). The suburbs were full of gardens and with the parks gave the city a picturesque, green appearance.

The population of Kamenetz-Podolsk consisted of Poles, Ukrainians, Jews and Russians. In the small towns the population was exclusively Jewish and in the villages 100% Ukrainian. The different religions of the population in the city were Jewish, Greek-Orthodox, Catholics and Lutherans. The Lutherans were a small minority, mostly Germans. The Poles were the Catholics, the Ukrainians and Russians were Greek-Orthodox. In Kamenetz-Podolsk the Jews comprised 50% of the population. But when the population was much smaller, the city at one time housed almost 10,000 Jews. This was during the time of the Chmelnitzki pogroms, when Jews from many towns sought refuge in Kamenetz-Podolsk, a fortified city, into which the bandits dared not enter.

The exact number of Jews in the city was not known till the middle of the 19th century, when a census was conducted for the first time. The 1847 census showed only



**Scholom Altman with Zionist leaders in Kamenetz-Podolsk
before leaving for Palestine in 1920**

4,629 Jews and the 1893 census—13,866 Jews out of a population of 36,951. The same census showed 18,211 Greek-Orthodox and 4,150 Catholics. Four years later in 1897 the Jewish population increased to 16,211. Figuring the natural increase the city probably had 60,000 people before the start of the 1st World War. During the war, the population grew to about 100,000 due to the thousands of Jewish refugees from the towns near the Galician border, driven out by the Czar's government (1915-1916). Then again, Jews from many towns settled in Kamenetz-Podolsk (1917-1920), when Ukrainians made pogroms on Jews. The population also increased during the war due to the fact, that in Kamenetz was the seat of the high command of General Brusilov. But after the bolsheviks permanently occupied the city, the population began to decline (1920). It was due to the fact, that Jews were escaping from the bolshevik regime to America, Canada, Brazil, and Palestine. Others left the city to settle in Kiev, Odessa and Moscow, where they had better economic and educational opportunities.

The city's decline was also due to the designation of Vinitza, instead of Kamenetz-Podolsk, as the capital of Podolia. The census of 1923 showed a population of only 33,172 persons in Kamenetz-Podolsk with 50% Jews. Again

a decline is shown in the census of 1926 when the population was only 31,000 (about half Jews). It is figured that when the Nazis slaughtered the Jews in Kamenetz-Podolsk in August 1941 there were about 10,000 left of them. This figure included the Jews of the city, those of surrounding towns and about 6,000 Jews brought from Hungary, Belgium, Holland, and Rumania.

2

Till 1914 Kamenetz-Podolsk was without a railroad. Connections with near and far places, with central Russia, with industrial and cultural centers of the country was by primitive transportation to the nearest railroad station. To get to a railroad the people of the largest city in Podolia had to travel by horse and wagon in the Summer and by horse and sled in the Winter. No question, that the absence of a railroad was costly for the city. Merchandise received from or consigned to Moscow, Kiev, Odessa, Warsaw, and Petrograd was transported in this manner. This was very expensive and affected the economy of the city. In the city were two forwarders: the All-Russian transportation and Insurance Company under the management of S. Bath (who came to Kamenetz from Berdichev) and the South-Western transportation company with Abraham Berenson and Menachim Moishe Lichtman at the head.

These companies exacted very large commissions for handling merchandise received from out of town, charged high percentage for credit, extra for storage, for security, etc. The companies assisted business with loans, secured with the consigned merchandise. Those who were not dealing with manufacturers at sources of supply, depended on the yearly fair at the town of Yarmolinetz, 60 miles from Kamenetz-Podolsk. To this fair, conducted from June to August, came owners of factories, their managers or agents from many parts of Russia. Business deals were conducted for agricultural products of Podolia and for the industrial output of factories in Russia, Poland, and even from abroad.

Kamenetz-Podolsk did not have industries for lack of a railroad and raw materials, such as coal and iron. The geographical position, being near the border was not favorable either for the development of heavy industry.

What was produced in Kamenetz-Podolsk was mainly for local consumption. The few factories in the city were: a beer brewery belonging to the Kleiderman family; a few tobacco and cigarette factories; two plants for making artificial mineral water (seltzer water); two cotton factories; a few flour mills and some other smaller enterprises. The only one, which could be classified as a heavy industrial plant was the Kramm's iron foundry, run by a German.

The city was the administrative center of the region (Gubernia) where the following were found: the office of the Governor, the district and city courts, treasury and internal revenue departments, administrative offices of the secret and city police, educational institutions — 6 high schools, a few grammar schools and a Junior high school, a religious (Greek-Orthodox) seminary (a University after 1917), hospitals, theaters, etc. The city armories housed four battalions of infantry and a Cossak cavalry regiment.

3

As in most cities in the Ukraine, where Jews were allowed to dwell, they were engaged in business and trades. The first census of 1847 gives the following statistic: 70 Jewish wholesalers, 389 retailers (2278 persons, including the families.) Of the retailers, 270 were selling clothing, shoes, hats, etc., 119 more selling food products. A total of 1750 Jews (6,300 including their families) were engaged in business. Jews were also in the majority among craftsmen and tradesmen. The census showed 713 tailors (1562 with their families); in food production 115 persons; locksmiths 108. There were no figures given for carpenters, engravers, house painters, shoemakers and others. It was presumed that at least 500 Jews were in such trades.

The 1847 census gives the number of government employees as 679 (131 women, 548 men); 119 professionals

and 304 Government pensioners. None of the above were Jews, as no Jew was allowed to be a government employee.

The majority of Jews were in business or in trades, the majority of gentiles were the customers.

The Christian customers consisted of Government employees, the police, firemen, the military, teachers, priests, landowners and peasants from nearby villages. Of course there were also Jewish customers and business also benefited from Jews from nearby and from far towns, when they came to Kamenetz-Podolsk to deal with banks, with government offices or for other reasons. There were 3 banks in the city—

1. the Government bank
2. the Union bank
3. the All-Russian business and trades bank.

Among the bank advisors were a few Jews, but Jews were never elected as directors. Jews were appointed as temporary advisors because of their knowledge of the economic conditions in the city. Their advice was needed, when it came to granting loans by the bank.

Substantial businessmen and owners of big estates had no difficulty in obtaining loans from banks, but small retailers, tradesmen and lower government officials could not get anywhere with bank officials. They had to depend on usurers, paying excessive rates and bonuses for loans.

To some extent this situation was alleviated by co-operative banks. One such bank was established by landlords, owners of estates, high government officials and rich businessmen. Officially, this establishment was open to all without discrimination. But there were no Jews in the management, and Jews, as a rule, were neither stockholders, nor managers. Loans to Jews were never granted. For this reason the second cooperative bank was established. The membership consisted of Jews and the borrowers were Jews. There was also a Credit Union with central offices in Moscow and Petrograd. The local branch was managed by a Jew. But the conditions for a loan and



**Zionists from Kamenetz-Podolsk at the conference in
Mohilev-Podolsk in 1920**

the collateral required were not easily met by many. There still remained a great number who patronized the usurers. In 1912 another Credit Union was founded locally by Jews and Gentiles. There was no discrimination in membership, and it proved to be of great help to the small businessmen.

4

In Kamenetz-Podolsk, as in other Ukrainian cities with a 50% Jewish population, the Jews spoke Yiddish. Only by the second half of the 19th century the use of other languages, especially of Russian, became common among the Jews. The census of 1847 showed only 99 Jews, among 16,112 who spoke another language besides Yiddish. By 1897 fully 24% of the Jews interviewed spoke Russian in addition to Yiddish. Many Jews in Kamenetz-Podolsk read Hebrew and Yiddish literature. Some of the well known writers who lived in Kamenetz-Podolsk in the 1860's and 1870's were Sholom Jacob Abramowitz (Mendele Mocher Sforim) and A. D. Gitlover. Some distinguished Jews were born in our city: Baron Ginzburg was born in 1857, as

plain David Ginzburg; among others were Professor Fishel Schneierson and Menachim Poznansky. Among those who became known writers in Israel but lived in Kamenetz-Podolsk in their youth were Schloimo Schpan (graduated high school and attended University in Kamenetz-Podolsk, born in Yarmolinetz), Aaron Ashman (born in Balin, studied and worked in Kamenetz-Podolsk) and Abraham Rosenzweig (Rosen) was a Hebrew teacher in Kamenetz-Podolsk.

5

The Turks reigned in Kamenetz-Podolsk during the 17th century and this gave the Jews a chance to be in contact with cities of the Ottoman Empire, like Kushta, Smyrna and others. Some Jews from Podolia sent their sons to those cities to study under famous Rabbis. Because the Messianic movement of Shabsa Zvi was very strong in Turkey, the boys from Podolia were influenced by this movement and brought home the teachings of the false Messiah. Later the false Messiah Jacob Frank gained many followers in Podolia. Lankorin, Satanov and other towns near Kamenetz-Podolsk became the centers of the "frankists." They were opposed by the orthodox Rabbis, who suspected Jacob Frank of being in sympathy with Christianity. The Jewish masses, who suffered from the Gaidamacks during the revolt of the Ukrainians against their Polish oppressors, were eager to follow the teachings of Jacob Frank. The Jews hoped that Messiah was coming to save them from further sufferings. The Polish clergy utilized the inner fight between the Talmudic Rabbis and the "frankists." Using the schism as an excuse, the Polish clergy tried to discredit the Talmud and the Rabbis. Bishop Dombrowski of Kamenetz-Podolsk ordered a public debate between the Rabbis and the "frankists." The Bishop ruled in favor of the "frankists" and ordered to bring books of the Talmud to Kamenetz-Podolsk, where over 1000 Talmuds (Schoss) were burned publicly in front of the cathedral. Nevertheless, the "frankists" lost their popularity and Jacob Frank

was discredited among Jews, as Shabsa Zvi was discredited before him. Soon another religious movement was started by a man, who was born in Okup, near Lanzkorinin in the district of Kamenetz-Podolsk. The new movement was Chassidism originated by Israel Bal Schem Tov. The new movement became popular very fast and it seemed as if every Jew was now a chassid. The chassidim were divided into followers of different Rebes (leaders). "Dynasties" of Rebes were established in many towns and cities of the Ukraine, Galicia and Bukovina. Each Rebe was a descendant of the Bal-Schem-Tov or of his original disciples. The "dynasties" of chassidic Rebes continued from father to son or to son-in-law. The chassidic movement was very strong for a century and spread to many parts of the diaspora, but in the 20th Century it began to die out.

6

Jews in many places became indifferent to chassidism with its strict orthodoxy and mysticism; some were very antagonistic and conducted campaigns against the chassidim and their Rebes. These anti-chassidim were called misnagdim. By the middle of the 19th century the number of misnagdim grew enormously and brought a new era among the Jews of Russia including those of Podolia. This was the beginning of the "enlightenment" among the Jews of Podolia.

The political situation of the Jews in Podolia since the annexation of the region by Russia in 1793, deteriorated. The freedoms Jews enjoyed under the Poles were gone. Under the Czars the Jews were not allowed to settle in villages, to own or farm land, a percentage "numerous closus" was established for Jews seeking entry into Russian High schools and Universities; most of Russian cities were outside the "pale," the small territory where Jews were allowed to dwell; many other economic, cultural and political restrictions were imposed on Jews. Nevertheless, new



**Chalutzim from Kamenetz-Podolsk on the way to Palestine
in 1920**

ideas, a new way of life began to infiltrate among Jews of Podolia, as elsewhere in Russia. The dissatisfaction with the old traditional education, with the cheder and yeshiva grew among Jews. In Kamenetz-Podolsk, as in many other cities in the Ukraine, Jewish families began sending their children to Russian schools. Jews began to learn Russian and even foreign languages and to read world literature. New ideas penetrated into formerly secluded Jewish life. Jewish and non-Jewish parties gained a foothold among Jews in Kamenetz-Podolsk, as such inroads were made elsewhere. The younger generation had a new approach to Judaism, divorced from Chassidism or Misnagdism. But assimilation, like that of Germany or Poland, never made headway in Kamenetz-Podolsk. The Jews here did not consider themselves as Russians of Moses' religious persuasion, but only as Jews.

7

With the start of the 20th Century, Jewish nationalism and Zionism became very strong among the Jewish population of Kamenetz-Podolsk. There were small societies known, as "Lovers of Zion" (Chovevei Zion), later these groups were organized, as branches of the Zionist Organization. They came into being after the 1st Zionist Congress in 1897. In Kamenetz-Podolsk the Zionists grew strong under the able leadership of David Schleifer. He was not



Chalutzim from Kamenetz-Podolsk in Kriat Anovim

satisfied with having a large organization in the city, but saw to it, that Zionist organizations were started in every city and town in Podolia. Under Schleifer the Zionists became a formidable political party and the work of the Zionists embraced general Jewish welfare and educational activities. Among Schleifer's co-workers were Israel Goldman and Israel Drachler, who were delegates to regional Zionist Conferences and to World Zionist Congresses. Until the Czarist Government drove the Zionists underground, Kamenetz-Podolsk became the Zionist Center for the entire region. To a conference in Kamenetz-Podolsk under Schleifer's leadership came such outstanding Zionists as Dr. S. Bondarsky, Dr. Bernstein-Cohen, Menachim Schenkin, Mark Nudelman and others. Schleifer was delegated to the conference in Minsk and Israel Drachler to the conference in Helsingfors (1906). To the 8th World Zionist Congress in Hague (1907) the Zionists in Kamenetz-Podolsk sent Drachler. At the next Congress in 1909 two delegates, Drachler and Goldman represented the Zionists of the city. To what extent the local Jewish population was influenced by the Zionists can be judged by the way the memorial for the founder of Zionism, Dr. Theodor Herzl, was conducted in Kamenetz-Podolsk when a telegram announcing his death reached our city. The sad news became immediately known in every part of the city and in nearby

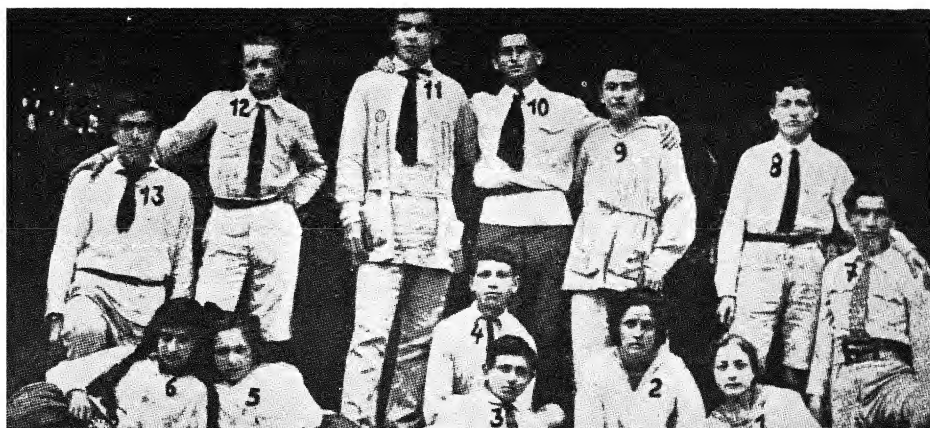
towns. Notices were posted that a memorial service would take place in the evening in the Grand Synagogue. Hours before the start of the services the surrounding streets were filled with men and women—there were no more seats in the synagogue. Not only Zionists, but people of other parties and non-party men and women came to pay respect to the memory of the great Jewish leader. Even the “intelligentzia,” those who always looked at Zionists as dreamers, were there. All Jewish stores and shops were closed as a tribute to Dr. Herzl’s memory. Representatives of the local government were seated alongside the local Zionist leaders during the impressive and dignified services.

8

The great debate in Zionist circles about substituting Uganda for Palestine found expression also in Kamenetz-Podolsk. There was a minority, the future “territorialists,” who were for Uganda, but the majority remained Zionists for Zion only and against any other territory.

The debate about Uganda was in full swing, when the first Russian Revolution took place in October 1905. Under pressure, Czar Nicolas the Second agreed to grant a constitution. A parliament, “the Duma” would be elected by the people in a democratic way and freedoms would be granted to everyone without any discrimination. Jews were among those who felt that at last they would become first class citizens. Unfortunately, the happy days of the Revolution did not last long. The Czarist Government reneged on the granted freedoms. To divert the attention of the people, the government blamed the Jews for all the miseries and resorted to pogroms, utilizing the “black hundred” of the “Union of Russian people.” Under the direction of the secret police, riots were started in many cities, maiming and killing Jews, and plundering Jewish property.

In Kamenetz-Podolsk, where Katzapi (Russians from central regions) were seldom seen, quite a number of them



"Haschomir Hazoir" in Kamenetz-Podolsk in 1923

suddenly appeared. During the market day the Katzapi started a riot inciting the peasants, who came to sell their products, to loot the stores and kill Jews. Most of the peasants hurriedly left the city for their homes in the nearby villages, the rest were chased by the local police, as was ordered by Governor Ehlers, a liberal. The "Hagana" was prepared to step in and stop a pogrom, but it became unnecessary, when the Katzapi disappeared, as suddenly as they came to the city. Damage was slight in stores and in a few homes near the market place on the Novy Plan.

In the early days of the Revolution the Socialists Parties appeared from the underground and started a propaganda campaign to get members. Their propaganda was aimed at the poorer working class and at the youth of all classes. Open air meetings were arranged in the little parks in the center of the city at the end of the working day. In Kamenetz-Podolsk were very few native socialists, but propagandists from other parts of Russia, came and were trying to get converts. Kadets and Octiabrists, Anarchists and Social-Democrats, Socialist-Revolutionists and Jewish Bundists competed for votes to the "Duma." Poale-Zionists and Zionists appealed to the Jewish population. To the Zionists came new people bringing new ideas. They

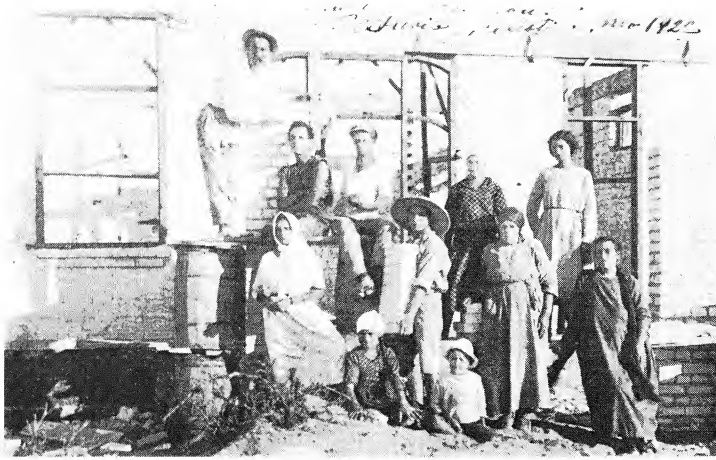
preached Social Justice in the diaspora, as well, as in Palestine, when it will be a Jewish State. A young fellow, came from Odessa to Kamenetz-Podolsk, ostensibly to lecture about Jewish literature and culture. He was dark with penetrating black eyes, dressed in a tunic, as worn by Revolutionists. Although quite young the stranger was very impressive. He was Chaim Greenberg, in later years a world renown Zionist leader. Although he did not name the party, it was obvious that he was talking about the Zeire-Zion program. In the late 1920's Chaim Greenberg came to America, where he united the American Zeire Zion with the Poale Zion and became the spokesman for the United Labor Zionist front.

9

The Helsingfors Zionist convention in 1906 stressed the need for cultural activities by Zionists. When Israel Drachler returned from that convention the Kamenetz-Podolsk Zionist organization worked out a program in conformity with the Helsingfors resolution. Efforts were made to improve and strengthen the Blavstein school for girls. A Jewish non-party club was organized to serve the cultural needs of the Jewish population. Among other things the Jewish club started a library and before long it contained 2000 volumes in Hebrew, Yiddish and Russian. Another project of the Zionists was the improvements in the government subsidized Talmud-Tora, the school on the Polski-Folvarek. Under the pressure of the Zionists the curriculum was changed to include the study of the Russian language, arithmetic and other subjects. A workshop was started and the students had to wear a uniform. Poor students were provided with uniforms free and lunches were given free to all students. The Jewish free kitchen (Hachnush Horchim) was another target of the Zionists, and here too improvements took place. The party work consisted of cultural undertakings, propaganda and collections for Zionists Funds. Kamenetz-Podolsk was under the jurisdiction

of the Odessa Zionist Committee with M. M. Usishkin at the head. In 1907, the Odessa Committee sent to Kamenetz-Podolsk the well known writer and Zionist A. M. Borochoy. Under his direction the Kamenetz-Podolsk Executive Committee was reinforced with representatives from the following centers: from Balta Menachem Altman; from Zvanitz-Scholom Altman; from Vinitza—Zvi Isarson; from Dini-vetz—Joseph Blank and from Kamenetz-Podolsk—David Schleifer, Israel Goldman and Israel Drachler. With the assistance from the central committees in Odessa and with help from Vilno the Zionists in Kamenetz-Podolsk achieved a high degree of efficiency. By 1908 the Zionist work in Kamenetz-Podolsk was considered of the highest in the country. Jewish Cultural work was not neglected either. In 1908 the poets Schimon Frug and Leib Jaffee came from Odessa to deliver lectures about Jewish literature; from Vilno came the noted Zionist Dr. Daniel Pasmanik, then Gorelick, the editor of "Dos Yiddische Folk." The last one was popular not only with the Zionists but also with anti-Zionists. Because Gorelick wrote in Yiddish, Bundists, Poale-Zionists and others came to his lectures. By 1909 the attitude of the police toward Zionists changed. On a tip from the higher ups the police decided to stop the work of the Zionists. During Passover (1909) the police raided the office of the Zionist organization and confiscated all documents and correspondence. The secretary Goldman was requested to translate everything into Russian. Then a law suit was instituted against all members of the Zionist executive committee.

The case came up in 1911 in the district court in Kamenetz-Podolsk. D. Schleifer, the brilliant lawyer, who was the head of the Zionist committee defended the accused. The members of the Zionist executive committee were found not guilty, but the court also ruled, that the Zionist organization was not legal in Russia. From now on all Zionist activities had to be stopped. Without an organization, the cultural work started by the Zionists was continued for a while by inertia and then died out. The library left from the defunct Jewish Club became the struggle point



**The Blatman family building their own house in Tel-Aviv
in 1922**

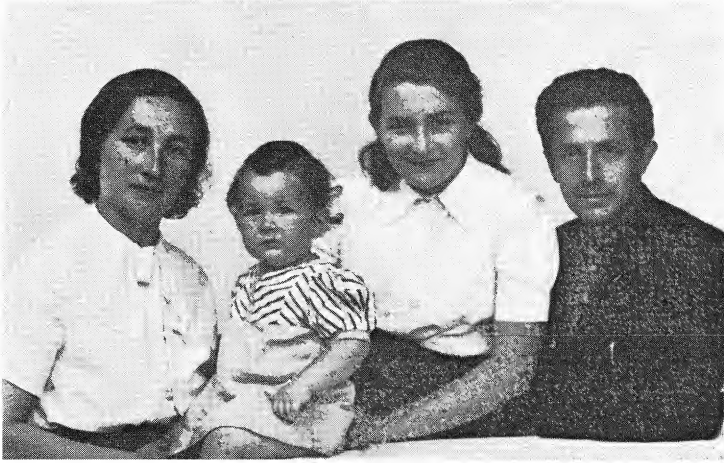
between the Yiddishists and the Hebrewists. A noted victory for the Hebrewists was won, when the famous Zionist, publicist and orator, Vladimir Jabotinsky came to Kamenetz-Podolsk. His lectures about Hebrew literature and culture attracted so many, that a large crowd remained outside the theatre, because all seats were sold in advance. Jabotinsky received an ovation after he finished his lecture. He invited a defender of Yiddish to come up on the stage and debate the subject. Nobody took up his challenge. The second lecture was even more successful. The explanation given in private by the Yiddishists, that to debate in public would expose the identity of the leftists was not taken seriously. Everybody knew, that the secret police had a dossier of anyone even remotely connected with a subversive political party. The Zionist idea was kept alive by different means. The police was paid off to overlook Zionist celebrations disguised as weddings, engagements or birthday parties. Every year a Palestinian Week was celebrated which culminated in a Purim Ball. It looked though, as if nothing was being done by Zionists and there was hardly any hope for a new generation of party members.

Because our city was so near to the Austro-Hungarian border it was one of the first to feel the impact of the 1st World War in August 1914. On the 5th of August an Austrian military detachment crossed the border and an Hungarian cavalry unit with artillery reached the city in the afternoon. With the excuse, that the city did not surrender at once the enemy bombarded the city of Kamenetz-Podolsk for 3 hours. The Russian military and civilian administration evacuated the city beforehand, and the mayor finally succeeded in surrendering the city. The enemy's military command imposed a contribution of 100,000 rubles in gold, silver or jewelry. A self-appointed committee of prominent Jews were going from door to door trying to collect the necessary sum. It looked though that the needed contribution would not be collected on time. There was fear that the city would be bombarded again, and many inhabitants left the city for nearby towns. Although the collected contribution fell short of the goal, the enemy commandant did not order reprisals. Instead he told the mayor to return everything to the donors. This was a gift from Emperor Franz Joseph, of Austria, whose birthday was that day.

Two days later the Austrians withdrew into Galicia, and Russian military detachments pursued them. The first detachment of Kozaks on entering the city, mercilessly beat every Jew, who happened to be in the street. The fighting front was in Galicia, at times far from our city and at times very near. The danger of occupation was so great that in 1915 all High schools were evacuated to other cities and were not returned till a year later. The Jews from cities and from towns near the fighting front were exiled deeper into Russia. It was common knowledge that circles close to the Czar were corrupt and sympathized with the enemy, a fact which in a way was responsible for the overthrow of the Romanovs. Nevertheless, Nicolas Nicolaievich, the uncle of the Czar and Supreme Commander of the Army ordered all Jews driven out from their homes near the front. He blamed the Jews for the defeats of the Russian armies

on all fronts. Hundreds of thousands of Jews became uprooted, homeless refugees, driven deep into Russia and Siberia. Jewish organizations in Petrograd, such as "Ecopo," "Oze" and "Ort" started a campaign to help the refugees. It happened that some of the leaders of these relief organizations had leftist affiliations. As a result the representatives sent to help the refugees often were members of illegal Jewish socialist parties. The administrator to help the refugees in Podolia, who came to Kamenetz-Podolsk, was a lawyer from Vilno, Elihuhi Gumener. An able administrator, a member of the Jewish Bund, Gumener surrounded himself with anti-Zionists, with Yiddishists, who played politics in the distribution of relief. Among the co-workers of Gumener in Kamenetz-Podolsk was the Poalei-Zionist (former Zionist) Israel Drachler, the Bundists, S. Bograd and Feivel Morgenstern and the Socialist-Zionist Moishe Sister (now Dr. Sister is a lecturer and Bible researcher in Israel). Although the Socialists hardly had a following among the Jews, Gumener was a formidable enemy to the Zionists. They pursued an anti-Zionist policy in distributing the funds from the central organizations. They particularly discriminated in Jewish School education.

Nevertheless, the Zionists grew stronger among the refugees and among the local Jewish population. The main reason was that the youth had Zionist sympathies. It started with the refugees from Zwanitz, who settled in Kamenetz-Podolsk and with a number of newcomers from small towns. They started a campaign of Hebrew education among the youth in Kamenetz-Podolsk. Groups of youths were secretly studying Hebrew in the evenings. New secret Zionist student societies were organizing. They studied the Hebrew language, Jewish History and literature; there was even a secret group of "chalutzim" who were preparing to leave for Palestine after the war. After the 1917 Revolution all these secret Zionist groups appeared on the Jewish political arena and received support from 90% of the population. Two leaders emerged from among the refugees on the Zionist horizon—Sholom Altman and Joshuha Saltzman. Another newcomer was Zalman Fradkin, who turned



**The family Leff brought to America from a camp in Germany
by the efforts of Mr. and Mrs. L. Blatman**

the local Zeire-Zion into the strongest political party in Kamenetz-Podolsk. Among others, who were politically active in Jewish affairs after the Revolution were Aaron Ashman, A. Rozenzweig, Mendel Goldstein, Meyer Zack, Israel Bashirovker, Jacob Schreier, M. Sigal, I. Weissman, Leon S. Blatman and Ettia Lerner.

A group of religious Jews, members of synagogues, under the leadership of Leib Kleiderman, were organized as "Achdut Israel." They generally supported the Zionists against the Jewish Socialist parties in Kamenetz-Podolsk.

11

Jewish schools, other than cheders and yeshivas, made very little progress in Kamenetz-Podolsk till after the 1917 Revolution. In 1900 the Schecter school for boys was started, but existed only a couple of years. In 1902 the Blavstein school for girls was founded. After struggling for 10 years this school also closed. The Talmud-Tora on the Polshi Folvarek was not considered much by the Jewish population, being more of a charitable than educational institution. During the 1st World War two Hebrew schools

"Toshia" and "Moledet" were organized with the help of the educational organization "Tarbut." Among those active in those educational projects were A. Ashman, A. Rozenzweig, I. Bashirovker, C. Schreberman, Leizer Malamud (Lamed) Wolf Blickstein and others. Two kindergartens were under the supervision of Ettia Lerner and Bath-Scheva Hess.

But the most important educational institutions started in 1915 illegally and doing excellent work after the Revolution were the "Beth-Am" and the "Kadima." Besides their educational value these institutions played also a political role, being pro Zionist and pro Hecholutz. The Yiddishists, the Jewish Socialists also organized a kindergarten and a school in Yiddish, but these schools were dwarfed by the pro Hebrew movement emanating from the "Beth-Am." The "Beth-Am" was started by a group, which eventually, as Chalutzim, went to Palestine. They founded the Kvutza "Kriat Anovim" under the leadership of Schika Saltzman. After the 1917 Revolution the "Beth-Am" attracted hundreds of young boys and girls. There were groups of youngsters from 12 to 18, who studied Hebrew, Jewish history and related subjects. A group of advanced students called "the University" were taking courses of higher Hebraic learning and literature under the tutorship of Leizer Malamud (Lamed). In 1916, a group of High school students founded a secret Zionist society "Kadima." A year later the "Kadima" enrolled, as members, almost every student in the city and became an important part in the Zionist network in Kamenetz-Podolsk. Among the founders of the "Kadima" were the brothers Jacob and Israel Brandman. Because they had a musical education (at the Petrograd Conservatory of Music) and were talented, it was natural for them to start a musical branch of "Kadima." During the first 3 years of the Revolution the orchestra and choir of "Kadima" became the pride of the Zionists. Regardless of what regime prevailed in the city, "Kadima" gave musical concerts to which Jews and non-Jews came. On June 27, 1920 "Kadima" gave a concert in honor of the visiting delegates from the American Joint



**Government Boys High School in Kamenetz-Podolsk
in 1914**

Distribution Committee. Professor I. Friedlander, Editor Maurice Kass and Dr. Leff were quite impressed; they were surprised to find in the Ukraine, after years of pogroms, a musical group like "Kadima" with such high standards.

After the bolsheviks occupied the city in November, 1920 the majority of "Kadima" members escaped to Palestine. There they gave concerts for "Gdud Havoda" in Tel-Aviv and in Petach Tikva. Interesting to note, that one of the founders of "Kadima" Uri Michaeli (Pressman) after working for years for the Histadrut, occupied an important position in civil aviation in Israel.

Those of "Kadima" who remained in Kamenetz-Podolsk were persecuted by the bolsheviks, as counter revolutionary.

During the first three years of the Revolution Kamenetz-Podolsk was under the rule of Ukrainians of the Rada, under the Germans in the time of Getman Skoropadsky, under the Petliura Ukrainians and Poles and under the Bolsheviks. Due to the changes in the regimes the population suffered. For months at a time commerce was at a standstill, at other times the farmers did not bring any agricultural products to the city and the population was

at the brink of starvation. But the Jews suffered more than others. During the changing of regimes not only Jewish property was in jeopardy, but Jewish lives were in grave danger. At times the outrages of soldiers took the form of pogroms when Jews were killed and maimed. Pogroms in Kamenetz-Podolsk and nearby towns and cities took place during the change over from Petliura to the bolsheviks and vice versa, during occupation by bands of independent Atamans, pogroms were also perpetrated by General Denikin's soldiers, never by the Red Army. The biggest pogrom in Kamenetz-Podolsk occurred in June 1919, when Petliura's army returned from exile in Galicia. 72 innocent Jews were murdered, many more wounded and millions of Jewish property destroyed or stolen. Pogroms during Petliura's regime were due to the weakness of the government and indifference or design of military commanders, who looked for a scapegoat for their inability to defeat the Red Army. The Ukrainians and the Denikintzi killed Jews with the outcry: "Kill Jews and save the Ukraine (or save Russia) from Jewish bolsheviks." It is possible that the Red Army did not make pogroms because of a stronger discipline and due to the fact that many Jews served in that army not only as privates, but also as officers up to the highest ranks.

12

When a regime stayed for a while and the fighting front moved further from the city it looked as though this regime was destined to remain permanently; life in the city then became more or less normal. The scars from the fighting and from pogroms did not heal completely, but were not too visible. In Kamenetz-Podolsk at such periods Jewish community life proceeded at an accelerated pace. Under the new laws of National-Personal Autonomy the Jewish population elected a democratic community council (Kehila). This representative body took over a number of functions formerly the province of the local or central government. The Kehila had supervision over cultural,



**Avner Korman killed in battle with Petliura's pogrom band
under Orinin May 1919**

educational, spiritual and philanthropic institutions of the Jewish population. The Kehila was also the representative of the Jews in dealing with local or central governments. If the form of N.P.A. would have remained it would have given the Jews of the Ukraine an autonomy unequaled in the history of Jews in any country at any time. Jewish political parties fully realized the importance of the Kehila and were active on the political arena, trying to get more and more supporters for their programs. The minority parties tried to offset the power of the Zionists in the Kehilas; some parties played up to the Government of the moment. Jewish socialist parties, being minorities without representation in the Kehila, did exactly this in Kamenetz-Podolsk. During the bolshevik regime

they helped to abolish the democratically elected Kehila and during the Petliura regime they conspired with the Minister of Jewish affairs, Pinchos Krasny, to hinder the work of the Kehila.

13

After the Revolution, as during the Czar, one Jewish organization had to remain secret and underground. This was the Hagana—the Jewish self-defense. In Kamenetz-Podolsk as in many cities in Russia, the Hagana was started after the pogrom in Kishinev in 1903. In 1905, when pogroms were organized in many places, the Hagana in Kamenetz-Podolsk was ready to defend the Jews from bands of hooligans. Luckily the Hagana did not have to go into action—the abortive riot in Kamenetz-Podolsk did not develop into a pogrom. During the pogrom years 1918-1920 the Hagana was revived and reorganized. A great help in this was the Auxiliary Police. The city government inaugurated a voluntary Auxiliary Police force to patrol the city streets at night. The Auxiliary Police functioned under the Ukrainian and under the bolshevik regimes. Many young Jewish men, acting as Auxiliaries, were also secret members of the Hagana. This gave the Hagana a chance to train the members in handling of firearms and even to secure additional arms and ammunition. These were kept in hiding, and thus the Hagana was prepared to stop a pogrom by a small band.

14

Late in May 1919, when the city was under the bolsheviks, the Hagana was called into action. Rumors, leaked from the Revkom, circulated that a band of Ukrainians crossed from Galicia into Orinin, where a pogrom is imminent. It was late in the evening when the members of the Auxiliary Police were called to assemble at the central plaza in front of the Revkom. A Red Army officer asked

if those present were willing to go to Orinin to stop a pogrom. Those present, about 80-90 men, all Jews, volunteered and were joined by about 50 Red Army men with 2 pieces of artillery and a few machine guns. Only about 8 miles from the city“ the marchers on Orinin” ran into a barrage of small arm fire. There was no other way left but to fight. It seems, it was a Petliura military detachment, which was sent to occupy the city, stripped of Red Army defenders. The pitched battle did not last long, but the Gaidamacks, not knowing the strength of the enemy, and having heavy losses, retreated toward Galicia. It turned out that 60 Gaidamacks had been killed and an unknown number wounded. Only one Red Army soldier and one member of the Hagana, Abraham Korman, were killed and a few Auxiliary Policemen lightly wounded.

The Red Army did not send reinforcements and the bolsheviks evacuated the city. It became clear that the bolsheviks, in desperation, trying to hold back the enemy, tricked the Jews to go with them and fight the Gaidamacks. Realizing that the Ukrainians were advancing with a large military force, the Hagana decided that resistance would mean slaughter of all Jews in the city. The hope, that under Petliura we would not witness a repetition of the deeds of Gaidamacks like under Bogdan Chmelnitzky (1648) was baseless. It was enough to remember the slaughter of Jews in Proskurov under Ataman Semosenko (Petliura's General) in February 1919 not to expect a miracle now. The Gaidamacks entered Kamenetz-Podolsk without meeting any resistance, and immediately started a pogrom which lasted 3 days. Seventy-two Jews were killed, many injured and millions of dollars of Jewish property destroyed. A number of Jews tried to escape to the nearby towns, but many were overtaken on the roads and killed. Among those who managed to escape was Alexander Chomsky, the son of the richest druggist in the city. Alexander Chomsky was an assimilated Jew, did not belong to any political party and served as an Auxiliary Policeman. As such he took part “in the march on Orinin.” When things quieted down and the Petliura Government settled



Mechel and Rose Kaplun killed together with their two teenaged daughters by the Nazis

in Kamenetz-Podolsk, Chomsky came home. Before long he was arrested and put on trial before a military tribunal, as a bolshevik. He was accused of being with the Red Army fighting against the Gaidamacks. Mr. Alter, a prominent lawyer defended Chomsky. He pointed out that, like many other Auxiliary Policemen, Chomsky fell for the bolsheviks' provocation," that Chomsky believed that they, the Policemen, were going to stop a pogrom in Orinin perpetrated by a small band of irregulars. Alter brought to court some of the leading Jews, Ukrainians and Poles, as character witnesses for Chomsky. In his summation Alter called for a court-martial of the commander, who allowed a Petliura regiment to kill innocent Jewish men and women as revenge for the defeat of his regiment by a

handful of Jewish Policemen. Nevertheless, the court found Chomsky guilty and sentenced him to be shot. An appeal to Petliura, who happened to be in Kamenetz-Podolsk, freed Chomsky. An investigation of the "march on Orinin" and of the pogrom in our city was ordered, but nothing ever reached the public on these subjects.

15

Delegations from nearby towns and from far cities arrived in Kamenetz-Podolsk seeking relief for the pogrom sufferers. Our city was the largest Jewish community of the Ukraine liberated from the bolsheviks, and the Minister of Jewish Affairs of the Petliura Government was now in our city. The Kamenetz-Podolsk Kehila organized a relief committee and tried, as much as was possible, to help those who suffered from the pogroms. In the meanwhile, the news of what happened to the Jews in the Ukraine spread throughout the world. Jews in many countries were organizing relief for the sufferers. One of the first to reach with such help was a delegation of the American Joint Distribution Committee. In February 1920 Judge H. Fisher and Max Pine from America came to Kamenetz-Podolsk. Two months later a relief mission of the "Joint" (Professor I. Friedlander, Maurice Kass and Dr. Leff) came to Kamenetz-Podolsk and transferred a sum of money to the local relief committee. After a few sessions with the local relief workers, who explained the situation in nearby cities and towns, the delegation decided to travel to as many places, as possible to study the needs of the sufferers on the spot. Traveling from town to town the delegates saw the unbelievable misery in which the Jews lived after the pogroms. They visited the cities Mogilev-Podolsk, Staro-Konstantine and Proskurov. This last one still had not recovered from the slaughter of Jews a year before.

Meanwhile the Red Army broke through the Ukrainian front and Red Army patrol were in the vicinity. Unable to proceed to Kiev or Odessa the delegation returned

to Kamenetz-Podolsk. From here it was decided to go back to Warsaw and receive further orders from New York. The delegation split into two groups: one car with Professor Friedlander and Dr. Cantor left early July 5, 1920; the rest of the delegation stopped for an appointment with the War Minister. There they were informed that Friedlander and Dr. Cantor were killed by a Red Army patrol near the town of Yarmolinetz. The Americans left by a different route for Poland. Four months later the Red Army occupied Kamenetz-Podolsk. The bolsheviks confiscated the relief funds and distributed the relief supplies among the peasants of nearby villages.

16

During the first years of the 1917 Revolution, when the Ukraine was soaked in Jewish blood, when over 100,000 Jews were killed in pogroms, when the Petliura Gaigamacks were as barbaric as those of Bogdan Chmelnitzki, there were also happy interludes for the Jews.

In Kamenetz-Podolsk among such happy days was May 12, 1920, when the Jews of the city celebrated the Balfour Declaration.

For the occasion the city was decorated with white and blue banners, with flowers and oriental rugs hung from the windows and balconies. A big parade was organized in which thousands of school children, men and women passed the reviewing stand.

The leading Zionists and Kehila executives, representatives of the local and central governments addressed the citizens of the city. The Petliura cabinet was represented by the Minister of Education, Professor Ogienko and by the Minister of Jewish Affairs, Pinchos Krasny. There were diplomats accredited to the Ukrainian Government and other important personalities. Orchestras played the "Hatikva" and groups of children sang Palestinian songs.



**Motia Kaplun, an officer in the Red Army killed
in battle under Stalingrad**

There was hope that the Jews would sooner or later get their land—Palestine. Another happy day was the departure for Palestine of the first group of Halutzim.

The Hecholutz in Kamenetz-Podolsk was started a few years before the actual departure for Palestine. In 1917, thanks to the efforts of Leon Blatman, a number of Chalutzim were allowed to work on the farm on his alma mater, the technical high school, under the supervision of the school agronomist. Later the Chalutzim rented a farm where they did all the agricultural work; a group of the chalutzim went to Cherson to work on the farms of Jewish colonists; some of the Chalutzim went to Odessa where they received theoretical instructions from agronomist A. Zussman. On arrival in Palestine the Chalutzim from Kamenetz-Podolsk founded the kvutza "Kriat Anovim";

the success of that Kvutza is due to some degree to the preparations the Chalutzim received in Kamenetz-Podolsk.

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In November 1920, the Red Army drove the remnants of the Ukrainian Army and the Petliura government into exile in Galicia, Poland. Kamenetz-Podolsk was now permanently under the bolsheviks. During the second World War the city was temporarily occupied by the Nazis. Even before the bolsheviks took over Kamenetz-Podolsk in 1920 the majority of Jews fled from the city, knowing very well that the bolsheviks would bring ruin for the Jews economically, spiritually, culturally and politically.

During the first years of occupation of Kamenetz-Podolsk by the bolsheviks Jews from the city were escaping to Rumania across the Dniestr River 15 miles away or to Galicia an equal distance from the city. From there the refugees from Kamenetz-Podolsk went to Palestine, to the United States or Canada. Some Jews would disappear from the city, leaving everything to be confiscated by the bolsheviks or stolen by the peasants. Other Jewish families traveled to big cities, like Moscow, to settle there. Opportunities in large cities were better than in Kamenetz-Podolsk. The bolsheviks designated Vinnitza as the capitol of Podolia and transferred all important institutions from Kamenetz-Podolsk. Before the start of the second World War the Jewish population of the city dropped to about 10,000, a fraction of the number of Jews in 1920.

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Just before the Hitler Army invaded the Ukraine many Jews from Kamenetz-Podolsk succeeded in leaving the city and going deep into Russia or Siberia. When the Nazis occupied the city they herded the remaining city Jews and also Jews from surrounding towns into the Karvasar, where

they established the Ghetto. From Rumania, from Hungary, from Belgium and Holland the Nazis brought trainloads of Jews who were put into the ghetto together with the native Jews. During the 27th, 28th and 29th of August 1941 all Jews from the Ghetto in Kamenetz-Podolsk were assembled on the Podzamcha and executed. The bodies were buried in deep trenches and the earth smoothed over; no signs were left that thousands of Jews were buried there.

After the end of the Second World War the Kamenetz-Podolier Relief Committee in New York was in touch with hundreds of people from Kamenetz-Podolsk, who were scattered in many places in Russia and Siberia. The biggest work of the New York Relief committee was to find relatives in the United States or Israel for the survivors in Russia and in the Ukraine. For a number of years visitors to Russia were not allowed to travel into Kamenetz-Podolsk. Most of the survivors from Kamenetz-Podolsk settled in the city of Chernovitz, formerly in Bukovina, now annexed to the Russian Ukraine. In 1963, a former Kamenetzer, now living in Colombia, South America visited the city where she was born; another visitor to Kamenetz-Podolsk was a former Kamenetzer now living in New York. Both brought the sad news that Kamenetz-Podolsk was completely ruined and not rebuilt by the Russians. The old city was not fit for people to live in and those who returned to the city are now on the Novy Plan and in other suburbs. The Jewish inhabitants consist only of old pensioners and most are not originally from the city of Kamenetz-Podolsk.

A CITY THAT WAS

by

LEON S. BLATMAN

The City I Knew in My Youth

Of all the cities in the Ukraine, Kamenetz-Podolsk was considered one of outstanding beauty. The river Smotrich flows around the old city like a belt, forming an island, which was connected by bridges with the mainland. Approaching the city, which stood deep in green of parks and orchards, one would be reminded of a painting of a medieval town on one side and of a modern city on the other. The newer suburb of Kamenetz-Podolsk, the "Novy Plan," was built in a geometrical pattern with wide, clean, tree-lined streets.

The old city, however, was full of old minarets and churches, ruins of medieval forts, new and old stone buildings with narrow streets and large paved squares.

Kamenetz-Podolsk, the largest city in Podolia, was, in many ways, unchanged since the Turks. The region bordered on the west with Galicia (old Poland, then Austria, and again Poland, till Russia annexed it after World War II); to the South was Bessarabia (Rumania); to the north and east were provinces (Gubernias) of Cherson, Kiev, and Wolin. Podolia had other cities with large Jewish population, like Proskurov, Vinitza, Mohilev-Podolsk, Bar, and Jmerinka, and hundreds of smaller towns with 100% Jewish populations. The thousands of villages were 100% Ukrainian with here and there a few Jewish families. As a rule, the Czars banned Jews from living in villages, but some Jews remained, particularly those whose ancestors lived there for generations.

Kamenetz-Podolsk, the old city, was on a high cliff, formerly a fortified Turkish city, surrounded by a high stone wall. Parts of the wall, with gates, minarets, and fortification are still standing. The view from the "Novy Most," the modern bridge connecting the city with the suburb, Novy Plan, was magnificent. The river was far below like in a canyon, with a sheer drop of hundreds of feet on both sides. Only in a few places, the straight walls



**Chalutzim from Kamenetz-Podolsk on the way
to Palestine**

left enough room on the banks of the river for small dwellings, where the poor of the “dolina” lived, or narrow open spaces which were used as bathing beaches.

Crossing the Novy Most, one could walk for two miles to the left through the “new boulevard” to the suburb “Polski Filvarek” or for three miles to the right through the Park “Proresnaya Dorojka” to the suburb “Russki Filvarek” with its magnificent villas (Datchas). Going straight ahead from the bridge into the suburb, Novy Plan, one would see modern buildings of high schools and government offices, the Pushkinsky Theatre, palatial homes with formal gardens and apartment houses. The main street led to the business center, where “fairs” were held; farther on was the race track “skatchka,” and the railroad station.

On the other side of the old city was the “old boulevard” and the Turkish bridge leading to the suburb, Podzamcha. This old bridge was really a tremendous stone wall, built centuries ago by the Turks. In the center of the wall was a gate, an opening the size of a 5 story building, through which the waters of the river flowed in the form of an artificial waterfall, connecting the western and eastern sides of the river Smotrich.

From the Turkish bridge the road led for 15 miles west to the Galician border and for the same distance south to

the river Dniestr and the border of Bessarabia (Rumania). The castles and fortification could be seen for a few miles from the bridge. There were rumors that a tunnel under the fortification led all the way to the river Dniestr, but nobody dared to go further than a short distance inside it.

In Jewish history, Kamenetz-Podolsk is of some interest—first, because of the martyrdom of the Jews of Podolia during the insurrection of Bogdan Chmelnitsky, when pogroms similar to those perpetrated by Petliura's army took place in the Ukraine. Second, because Kamenetz-Podolsk is of importance during the time of Shabsa Zvi and Jacob Frank. Kamenetz-Podolsk is also of interest as the place where Chassidism of Baal Shem Tov was born. At the start of the First World War, the population of Kamenetz-Podolsk was about 60,000 with 50% Jews, 25% Poles and the rest, Russians and Russified Ukrainians.

The city was not rich, but did not suffer from the poverty (among Jews) of Galician or Luthuanian cities. Of course, Kamenetz-Podolsk had its quota of the poor, underprivileged and chronically unemployed. But the majority managed to provide for their families.

Under the Czarist laws, Jews were not allowed to hold any government jobs. Like elsewhere in Russia, no Jew could be employed as a teacher, or by the banks, by the railroad, or in the post office, in telegraph or telephone offices, in the courts, or in any capacity by municipal, regional, or state subdivisions, including the police. Jews were not allowed to serve even as janitors or jail guards.

Starting with the Governor's palace, and down to the home of the jail Warden's, officials were provided with quarters in addition to their salaries. The city's gentile population, which consisted in its majority of officials, did not have to worry about its daily bread. The city had no industry. Industrial workers (non-Jews) could find employment only in a few places, such as at the electric station, at the railroad, at the iron foundry, in some of the printing shops, at the beer brewery and at flour mills. You could



Organizers of Textile-Employee's Union

Among them: M. Wasserman, who took part in organizing a strike against his father's business, Michael Kaplun, Morris Kaplun, Israel Nesis, Nachman Yakor, Carver, Presman, and the fiancée of Nesis, Lora Cogan.

not find a Jew at such occupations, as janitors, water carriers (by horse and wagon) chimney sweeps etc. But Jews comprised 90% of house painters, shoemakers, carpenters, tailors, watchmakers, etc. All the storekeepers were Jews. There were a few non-Jewish retail establishments, like Cook's shoe store, Winiarski's book shop, Juravliev's linen shop and the Cooperative Department Store.

But most of the retail and wholesale business was in the hands of Jews. The business establishments were in the centre of the old city; there were small and large stores, some of them were not inferior to stores on the main streets of Petrograd, Moscow, Kiev or Odessa. The owners of hotels, restaurants, movie houses, drug stores, the local press and private banks were Jews. Some Jews would engage in the export of agricultural products, were trading with farmers at the weekly and yearly fairs or traveled through the villages buying grain, fruit or vegetables. There were some exporters who dealt with the owners of large estates, buying from them grain, livestock, forest and poultry.

A special Jewish occupation was the brokerage, the go-between, the "mekler." When a Jew from the province came to Kamenetz-Podolsk, because a son was to appear before the draft board he would be helpless without a mekler. The proper mekler would make contact with the military doctor, with a member of the staff and arrange things for a price. If one had business in the courts, or some other government office, a mekler could facilitate the transaction and help cut the red tape. To reach a high police official, even in the secret police, to influence any official or to petition the Governor one was advised to do it with the help of the proper mekler. At times one would approach a mekler who knew the top mekler who really knew the top official. There were commercial meklers who helped in business transactions with the owners of large estates. It looked, as though a large percentage of Jews in Kamenetz-Podolsk were meklers. And the local expression was, that meklers, "luftmenchen" make a living by "pulling ribbons from the air."

But discounting businessmen and meklers the majority of Jews in the city worked hard to earn a living. They were the tailors, the shoemakers, the carpenters, the housepainters, the printers, the tinsmiths, the barbers, the cobblers, the furriers, the watchmakers and others engaged in trades. They worked for themselves, employing a helper or two. Only the printers like Landwiger, Weinbaum, Konigsberg & Fitterman had dozens of employees. Among the professionals, like doctors, pharmacists, dentists, lawyers, midwives and private tutors, the majority were Jews. To round up occupations we must mention the Jewish clergy: a few orthodox Rabbis, (the Government-appointed Rabbi Oksman did not perform the duties of an orthodox Rabbi), the schochtim, (slaughterers of fowl and cattle for kosher meat), the custodians of the synagogues (shamosim) and a few others. A great number of Jews in Kamenetz-Podolsk were religious, but the city, nevertheless, was not under the domination of the orthodox Jews. True, the stores and shops were closed on Saturdays, but one could hardly see Jews dressed in "kapotas" and "shtramlach" and wearing



Technical High School in Kamenetz-Podolsk in 1909

long, curly sideburns (payas), a sight frequently seen even today in Williamsburg, Brooklyn. Modern dressed, clean shaven Jews could be seen, often smoking a cigarette on Saturdays. Jews went to the theatre and to the movies on Friday nights and Saturdays and, of course, high school students went to classes, where they had to write on Saturdays. Only on High Holydays did everybody go to the synagogue; this included doctors, some of whom would ride in their cars till a block or two away from the house of worship, then walk.

Young Jews would talk in Russian in public, although the majority spoke Yiddish at home.

Among the older generation were many chassidim, followers of the Zinkover, Gusatiner or Chortkover Rebes. The local Rebe, Naftultzi was not popular, except among the poorer working Jews. Youngsters, not accepted in local high schools on account of "the norma," studied with private tutors, usually following the curriculum of the schools. These so called "externi" sometimes succeeded in entering into higher classes or would pass an examination for the entire course of the high school. In such cases they could enter the university, if they were lucky in the drawing and

their names came up among the 10% of Jews to be admitted to a University.

The city's school system had nine high schools: the boys high school, the technical high school, two high schools of commerce, two high schools for girls, the greek orthodox seminary, the pension for christian girls and the city's junior high school. There were also a number of grammar schools and Ganitsky's music school. In 1918 the Ukrainian Government established the Kamenetz-Podolsk University, temporarily using the facilities of the technical high school.

The Jewish educational institutions consisted of a number of traditional cheders, of private Hebrew teachers and of the government subsidized Talmud-Tora. There were at one time two modern Jewish schools, Blavstein's for girls and Schectman's for boys. They did not get enough support and after a few years were forced to close. As a rule Jewish high school students did not continue their meagre Jewish education obtained in cheders. For a while it looked, as though a generation devoid of Jewish education was growing up. There was the danger of assimilation and, what is more, russification by Jews of the local Ukrainians. This was something the Czarist government welcomed. But a few years before the first World War a nationalist and Zionist movement sprung up among Jewish high school students. Groups were formed to study in secret Hebrew and Yiddish, Jewish history, Jewish literature and Zionism. The city library and school libraries were sufficient until then, but now the Jewish library became popular among the Jewish youth.

Cultural needs in the city were filled by the local press: Podolsky Krai, a progressive organ and "Podolianin," the voice of the government and the extreme right, were the two local newspapers. Papers from other cities, like Kiev and Odessa, were received and sold in fairly large numbers. Books and periodicals were available in the book stores of the brothers Banvelman, Kaplun and Winiarsky. There was a small group of Ukrainian intellectuals around their club "Prosvita," but Jews had little contact with them. Like the Jews, the Ukrainians had to conduct

their activities in secret. Other cultural needs of the city were fulfilled by a repertory theatrical company at the city theatre. Opera companies—Russian and Italian—visited the city for a few weeks every Winter. Concerts by outstanding artists and by symphony orchestras were given occasionally at the Pushkinski Dom. The circus came to town every Spring. Jewish theatre was not allowed, except by special permit from the Governor. Such rare occasions were usually turned into Zionist events. The great Kamin-sky with her company gave a few performances in 1912 coming all the way from Warsaw. After each performance there were cries “Heidot” and singing of the “Hatikva.” The city had four movie theatres, the largest “the Gigant” featured vaudeville. Roller skating was tried, but did not become popular. Horse racing on the city track “skatchka” was only for the rich gentry. Life was quite placid in Kamenetz-Podolsk, except for such events, as a visit by aviator Utochkin in 1911. He flew his homemade Aeroplane over the “skatchka,” landed to take on a passenger and after a few turns over the city landed again. Another event was the visit of the Czar Nicholas the Second in 1913, celebrating 300 years of the rule of the Romanovs.

Till the start of the first World War progress came slowly to Kamenetz-Podolsk. Automobiles were few, there was no electric tramway, like in other Russian cities, electricity was limited and the railroad was finished just before the War. The War and the Revolution of 1917 brought an upswing in the economic, cultural and political life of the city. After 3 years of Revolution, civil war and pogroms Kamenetz-Podolsk was finally occupied by the bolsheviks and became part of the Soviet Ukraine. Half of the Jews of Kamenetz-Podolsk managed to escape abroad and many traveled and settled in the larger cities of Russia. The decline of Kamenetz-Podolsk was accelerated by removing the important institutions to Vinitza which was made the capital of Podolia. Kamenetz-Podolsk, a second class provincial city was destroyed by the Nazis at the start of the Second World War and the remaining Jews were annihilated. This was the end of the Jewish community in Kamenetz-Podolsk.

The Jewish sport club "Maccabee"

From the first World Zionist Congress on the leaders of the movement advocated the formation of Zionist sport clubs. They suggested the name "Maccabee" in honor of the Biblical Heroes.

Such clubs were organized in Germany, in Austria and in a few other Western European countries. The feeble attempts to have such clubs in Russia were abandoned, when the Czarist Government declared the Zionists as subversives.

But the idea to have eventually such sport clubs was very much alive among the Zionist student organization "Hachover."

In 1915, in Odessa, where I was studying at the time, I met Jacob Granowsky, who, after the Revolution was the head of "Maccabee" in Russia. Granovsky seemed almost fanatical on the subject of Jewish sport clubs. He would single out a student from the province and explain to him the program of "Maccabee." He would rationalize, that in Odessa and in other large cities nothing could be done for "Maccabee," because the secret police has its agent in every house-in the janitor. Granovsky would point out that the secret police in the provincial cities and towns was not too sophisticated and could be easily bribed. Who would pay attention to a group of Jewish youths practicing gymnastics, riding bicycles, playing ball or engaged in other physical exercises?

I would listen to Granowsky and his enthusiasm would become contagious; I even promised to do whatever would be possible on my return to Kamenetz-Podolsk for vacation. Before I could start preliminary work Granowsky was arrested and exiled. After the Revolution I was too busy with Zeire-Zion work and other activities. In 1918, I met again Granowsky in Odessa, who was supervising the "Maccabee" all over Russia and the Ukraine. He remembered me and my promise to start a "Maccabee" club in Kamenetz-Podolsk. I decided to do it this time on my return home.



Party Card of a member of "Zeire-Zion" in Kamenetz-Podolsk

I called a meeting of young people, most of them high school students. Together with Isaak Schweitzer, Schimon Drachler, the Brothers Schoimer, T. Tackgaus and my younger brother Schmiel we started the Kamenetz-Podolsk Zionist sport club "Maccabee." A drive among boys and girls brought the formation of a number of groups of different ages to be engaged in sport activities. It took diplomacy and persuasion to secure the right to use the outdoor sport field of the Government High School for boys. Using the completely equipped athletic facilities of the school's field the different groups were drilled in simple gymnastics, in marching and ball playing. A former athlete, a Czech, stranded in the city, was engaged to supervise the athletic activities. He was a prisoner of war, but in peace time a physical culture instructor.

Now came the problem of raising funds to cover the expenses of the club. But this was soon solved by Takgaus, who had a simple formula. He would arrange dances and charge admission. The "Takgaus dances," soon known as "talcum balls" had no resemblance to the usual balls in our city. A ball at a high school would take weeks of preparations. It consisted of a musical part, a literary part, a free

buffet and dancing. Takgaus simplified all that—he provided the hall, the orchestra, spread some talcum on the parquet floor and let the participants entertain themselves by dancing and talking to each other.

During the first Summer the “Maccabee” club became very popular. Boys and girls would enjoy the free membership, where they played games, became experts in gymnastics, arranged walks into the woods and picnic in the fields. The teenagers of “Maccabee” were soon part of zionist celebrations where they exhibited their skills in athletics. The pride of “Maccabee” was the soccer team. Practice and matches took place on the field of the “scatchka,” (the horse racing track) on the Novy Plan. In the Spring of 1920, the city was jointly occupied by the Petliura and Polish military detachments. A match was arranged between the soccer team of the Polish Army and the “Maccabee” team. There were so many spectators, it looked as if half of the city came to watch the soccer game. The “Maccabee” team won, but the victory turned almost into tragedy. The Polish soldiers could not stomach the fact that the Jews won and started a riot. Thanks to the Ukrainian staff officer who witnessed the game, the riot was nipped in the bud. He called on the Ukrainian military police to stop the riot before it developed into a pogrom.

In the fall of 1920, the work of “Maccabee” was terminated by order of the bolsheviks who declared the sport club as a nest of counter-revolutionists.

The Zeire-Zion (Labor-Zionist) Party in Kamenetz-Podolsk

The 1917 Revolution brought into the open Jewish political parties which, until then, were operating secretly and illegally.

From the start, the majority of the Jewish masses supported the Zeire-Zion and Zionist Parties. This became evident when over 90% of the Jews voted for these parties in local city elections and in elections to the Kehilla (Council of the Jewish Community). The same results were shown in elections to the all-Ukrainian Rada (Parliament) and to the Founding all-Russian Congress, which the bolsheviks dissolved by force.

In Kamenetz-Podolsk, the Kehilla president was the Zionist M. Zack and the administration was in the hands of an able executive, the Zeire-Zionist, Z. Fradkin.

During the first three years of the Revolution, Kamenetz-Podolsk was under Ukrainian anti-bolsheviks regimes: first the government of the Rada in Kiev, then the Getman's regime with the help of the Germans; finally, the government of the Directoria (dominated by Petliura). Only in the spring of 1919, the local bolsheviks seized power in Kamenetz-Podolsk for about 6 weeks, then in 1920 the Soviets took over and that ended the civil war.

Under the Constitution of the Rada, which gave national personal autonomy to minorities, the local Kehilla administered Yiddish and Hebrew schools, and other cultural institutions, the Jewish Hospital and Home for the Aged; the Kehilla was also issuing birth and death certificates, wedding licenses, etc.

Zeire-Zion and all other Jewish political parties supported a free democratic anti-bolshevik Ukraine. But the Ukrainian government in Kiev ignored the fact that Zeire-Zion was a major Jewish party and when it came to Jewish affairs, dealt with the smaller Jewish Socialist parties, like Poalei-Zion, Bund, etc. This was only because the majority



Marinskaia Girls High School in Kamenetz-Podolsk in 1912

in the government were socialists. When the Petliura government under the pressure of the Red army retreated all the way to Poland (Galicia), some local Jewish Socialist parties conveniently forgot their allegiance to the Ukrainian government. In Kamenetz-Podolsk, the Bund, Poalei Zion, etc. used the bolsheviks to destroy the Kehilla and take over its functions. In 1919, during the six weeks of the bolsheviks' occupation, the Messrs. Guminers, Bograds and Company were reigning supreme over the Jewish Community.

On the return from Poland, in June 1919 the Petliura Government settled for a few months in Kamenetz-Podolsk, waiting for the liberation of Kiev. Among the ministries was the ministry of Jewish Affairs with Pinchos Krasny as Minister. He ordered the requisition of the Zionist Club building. Then Pinchos Krasny appointed as heads of the ministry's departments the same Jewish Socialists, who, only a few weeks before had destroyed the Kehila and co-operated with the bolsheviks. Again, Guminer, Bograd and Company held the power over the Kehilas, which began functioning in Kamenetz-Podolsk and in all cities and towns liberated from the Red Army. The Kehilas ignored the

Jewish minister, the Guminers and Company, whenever they could proceed without them.

The Zeire-Zion in Kamenetz-Podolsk still cut off from the central committee in Kiev, had to assume the functions of a temporary central committee. In mid-summer of 1919 a conference of Zeire-Zion from all liberated territories was called in Kamenetz-Podolsk. The conference was held in the city hall and was addressed by representatives of the Ukrainian Government. Of course, Pinchos Krasny was aware of the conference, but was not invited. In fact, among the resolutions at the conference was one condemning Pinchos Krasny, as a self-appointed usurper. He came from the miniature Folks Party, which did not have even a branch in Kamenetz-Podolsk or in any city in Podolia. I was in an unpleasant position, as Chairman of the Conference. The next morning I had to face Pinchos Krasny again, because with the approval of my party, I occupied an important though a non-political position in the Jewish ministry.

A memorandum, pertaining to the political situation among the Jews in the Ukraine and a demand that a Jewish minister should come from a major Jewish party, was presented in the name of the conference to the Directoria (Petliura, Prof. Schwetz and Makarenko). Z. Fradkin who had an audience with Prof. Schwetz, was assured that, as soon as Kiev would be liberated and the Rada (Parliament) would begin to function again, a new government responsible to the Rada would take over from the Directoria.

Then a minister of Jewish Affairs would truly represent the Ukrainian Jewry. For the time being, we would have to contend with Pinchos Krasny. A few months later, the Zeire-Zion received an invitation to participate in the "Derjavna Narada" (Government Advisory Council), which was to serve instead of the Rada until elections to a new Rada after liberation.

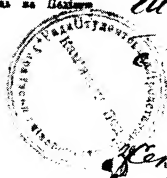
Our party sent a delegation of three: Z. Fradkin, Dr. Halpern, and Leon S. (Schloimo) Blatman.

The "Narada" took place on the main floor of the old Governor's House. Each Ukrainian, Jewish, Russian, and Polish party (except communist) was represented. In addition the Ukrainian clergy, the Army, the independent Ukrainian Guerrilla bands, the University, and the Directoria were represented. The diplomatic corps consisted of a few Polish civilian and military representatives and Ukrainian diplomats accredited to, but not recognized by, many European countries. Among them was Margolin, (a Jew) who tried unsuccessfully to represent the Ukraine in France.

When the usher examined our credentials, he asked, if we wanted to be seated with the other Jewish delegates. We declined and took places near Prof. Ogienko, the dean of our city's university. After a while, the formal greetings were over and Makarenko in the name of the Directoria gave the report of the Government. As in the past, there were promises of a bright future after the liberation: the Ukraine would be a free democratic country. The national personal autonomy for minorities would give the Jews, Russians and Polish citizens a chance to enjoy more privileges than in any other country. The 100,000 Jewish victims of pogroms were dismissed with the explanation that it was the work of bolsheviks, who infiltrated into the Ukrainian army. The Government gave the Jewish ministry a substantial sum of money to help the pogrom sufferers. Declarations by different delegations ensued. The Jewish Socialists made watered-down statements with hopes, that the Ukraine would be the Socialist Paradise, in contrast to the miseries of communist Russia. Finally came the declaration of the Zeire-Zion.

For almost half an hour, Fradkin kept the audience spellbound with his brilliant speech in excellent Ukrainian. He pointed out that millions of Ukrainian Jews were supporting Zeire-Zion and Zionists and were anti-communists. Even the Jewish Socialists were against the Bolsheviks. Notwithstanding, the Ukrainian army was crimson from the blood of Jews killed in pogroms. The Ukrainians were

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№ 02
в Кам'янці на Подоллі



Посвідчення
Года Губернський в Краснодар
Кам'янського Ветеринарного
Українського Університету
прикритою печаткою на
книжці підписали свідчить
що представник цього, сур'я
Шляхача Гасидовий
Гладман
секретарь зазначеної Ради
Голова Михайлюк
Секретарь Шляхач

Certificate by Students Council of Kamenetz-Podolsk University

killing with the cry; "Kill the Jewish Bolsheviks." The representative of the Directoria, who knew better, perpetuated the lie that the bolsheviks were the guilty ones. It was enough to mention the infamous Ataman Zeleny, whose bandits killed thousands of Jews, and who were proclaimed to be real Ukrainian patriots, it was time to make an end to this pretense. Fradkin demanded court-martialling the guilty ones and a policy that would make pogroms impossible. Unfortunately, the Red Army appeared, as the savior of innocent Jews from the Ukranian pogrom makers. Jewish youth, instead of fighting the Communists were forced to flee and join the Red Army to avenge the killings of innocent Jews. The Jews were in a dilemma: in theory they are for a free Ukraine, but fears of pogroms stop only when the Red Army drives out the Ukrainians from cities and towns.

The pittance given to the Jewish Minister was less than a fraction of the sums extracted from the Jews by the Army, as voluntary contributions. Millions were needed for rebuilding the ruined Jewish population and they would have to come from Jews at home and abroad. If the Ukrainian Directoria could not find a way to control and

discipline its army, the Jews of the Ukraine and from foreign lands were willing to organize a Jewish Legion, like Jabotinsky did in Palestine, fight the pogrom makers to protect their lives and property. With the exception of the Jewish Socialists and the Russian delegates, the assembled applauded Fradkin's speech.

The Guminers and the Bograds now used the moneys Petliura gave the Jewish Minister to suppress Hebrew schools and other institutions, to buy off small Kehilas in towns so that they obey their directives and look to the Jewish Minister for a hand-out. In Kamenetz-Podolsk the Zionist and Zeire-Zion, with the cooperation of religious and impartial groups, organized a relief committee to counteract the committee set-up, as an adjunct to the Jewish Ministry. Soon the representatives of the American Joint Distribution Committee arrived in Kamenetz-Podolsk and a program of helping the sufferers was set-up under the leadership of Jacob Schreier. In the meantime, the Red Army was pushing back the Ukrainian Army towards Galicia (Poland) and by November 1920, the last outpost, Kamenetz-Podolsk, was occupied by the bolsheviks. The work of Zeire-Zion practically stopped. The leaders and hundreds of its members fled to Rumania and Poland, and from there to Palestine and to America.

Professor Israel Friedlander's Relief Mission



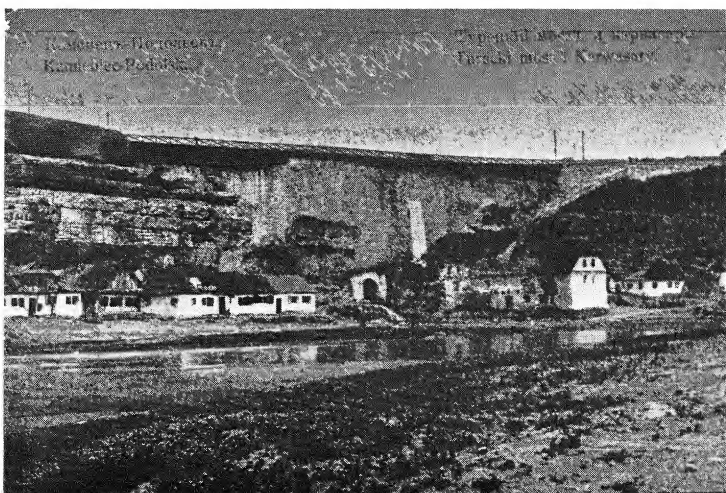
**Professor Israel
Friedlander
Dr. M. Leff**

The border with Galicia (Poland) only 15 miles away from Kamenetz-Podolsk was opened in 1920 after being sealed since the start of the First World War. After an absence of 6 years mail started arriving from abroad and a few former residents of Kamenetz-Podolsk came from America to see what happened to their relatives. These, so called "American delegates" brought money and visas also for others than relatives. This started the legal exodus of Jews from the city. Later on, under the bolsheviks, people secretly were escaping to Rumania or Galicia where they met the "delegates" and proceeded to America and elsewhere.

The American Joint Distribution Committee which had an office in Warsaw sent a delegation to Kamenetz-Podolsk. They had to survey the situation in the Ukraine and ascertain the relief needs of the Jews who suffered from the pogroms. The mission arrived in May 1920 and consisted of Professor Israel Friedlander, Maurice Kass and Dr. M. Leff. The three delegates represented different parts of American Jewry. The "Joint" was composed of the American Jewish Committee (rich and influential Yahudim, descendants of German Jews) and the Peoples' Relief (a number of organizations of Eastern European Jews in America). To avoid the sending of relief missions by different organizations, the "Joint" agreed to include in its mission the delegate of the Federation of Ukrainian Jews of America. This delegate, Mr. Maurice Kass, the editor of the Jewish Newspaper "Die Welt" in Philadelphia, was a man in his late fifties, a highly intellectual, literary personality, a person close to the masses. He was an excellent choice to bring relief to the

sufferers in the Ukraine. Professor Israel Friedlander, although the choice of the Yahudim, was a personality, to whom the Ukrainian Jews immediately felt a kinship. He was a man who understood the psychology of the Eastern Jews, who really felt their sufferings and was ready to help not only with money, but with deep sympathy. He showed humility and understanding of the tragedy of the Jews in the Ukraine, even though he, himself, was brought up in entirely different surroundings. Professor Friedlander, a man of the book, an historian and teacher, a deeply religious man and a Zionist became a friend to every person with whom he came in contact during his travels in the Ukraine. Dr. Leff was willing to take the risk involved in going with the relief mission to see, as a physician, in what way medical help could be brought to the people in that country.

Mr. Kass spoke Russian and Yiddish, but now was needed knowledge of the Ukrainian. This was one of the reasons the mission needed a secretary who could also act as interpreter in dealing with the officials. Mr. Jacob Schreier, the head of the Kamenetz-Podolsk relief committee, recommended me for the position, because I did some research of the pogroms and was familiar with the situation in many cities and towns. I also had command of Ukrainian, which I studied at the local University. An itinerary was worked out which would bring the mission into the larger cities, like Proskurov, Staro Konstantine, Mohilev-Podolsk, Bar, Zhitomir, Berdichev. It was planned to proceed from there to Kiev or Odessa, whichever would be liberated first. We arranged stopovers in smaller towns between the cities. I introduced the Americans to the War Minister, who supplied us with the necessary documents and notified all military and civilian authorities about our pending visits. We were assured we would get full co-operation. On our arrival in a town a welcoming committee was ready to meet us, present reports of what had happened in each town during the past two years and prepared plans, as to how to alleviate the urgent needs in food, clothing, medicine, etc. The relief mission stopped in every



Turkish Bridge in Kamenetz-Podolsk in 1905

town on the way to Proskurov. The Americans went to see for themselves the conditions under which the Jews lived, especially in the poorer neighborhoods. They could not believe their eyes, when they saw the poverty, the squalor, the misery of these unfortunates.

We finally arrived in the city of Proskurov. This was the place where the Gaidamacks of Ataman Semosenko only a year before slaughtered in cold blood hundreds of Jews on the pretence that they were suppressing a bolshevik revolt. The investigation ordered by Petliura absolved the Jews of any complicity and no proof of a communist uprising could be found. Dr. Liser, the head of the Kehila in Proskurov and our host for the night, told us what had happened in his hometown in February 1919. Dr. Liser's son, also a doctor and recently from London, told us how he could not get any of his father's letters into the "London Times." The editor could not believe the facts the older Liser described in the letters to his son. Now the son came to see his parents and friends and planned to have a talk with the editor of the "Times" on returning to London. Mr. Kass, a newspaper man, informed us that news of the pogroms were arriving from Moscow, but the American Press

dismissed it, as communist propaganda. He promised to publish in his paper the work of the secretary of the delegation, who based his figures and stories on the documents from the Ministry of Jewish Affairs.

Dr. Liser had a report of conditions in Proskurov and of some nearby towns, like Feldstin, Zinkov, Michaelpole, Derajna, Chan, Staro-Konstantine and others. The delegation expected to proceed north toward Jitomir and Berdichev, but could only go as far as Staro-Konstantine. We passed a few towns, where the reports turned in by the Kehilas showed, that no place escaped the pogroms during the past two years, and that the need for relief was staggering. On arrival in Staro-Konstantine we were advised to turn back. The city assumed that certain indescribable look, that unmistakable attitude that happened in every city before a retreat by one army and before the occupation by another. Usually this was the time when a pogrom on Jews by one of the armies would start. Jews were running in search for places to hide, or were leaving for another safer town. We were told that the Red Army under Marshal Buddenny defeated the Ukrainians in a few battles north and east of the city and was proceeding west on all fronts. We left Staro-Konstantine, but instead of going south toward Kamenetz-Podolsk, the delegation decided to go South-East. We wanted to visit as many towns, as were still accessible on the way to Mohilev-Podolsk. The military situation was changing from day to day, it seemed, even from hour to hour. The Americans showed unusual courage and determination to do the best under the circumstances. The Federation of Ukrainian Jews in New York gave Mr. Kass a few hundred letters from its members to relatives in the Ukraine. On arrival in a city or town Mr. Kass would turn over the letters to the local relief committee for distribution. Now we were anxious to leave the letters in the towns near the front before the Red Army cut off communications with the outside world. Professor Friedlander made arrangements for each relief committee to get funds from Kamenetz-Podolsk. We knew that relief money was expected in Kamenetz-Podolsk from Warsaw,

sent with the American delegate, Dr. Cantor. We finally arrived in Mohilev-Podolsk, where the river Dniestr separates the Ukraine from Rumania. This city, like other towns where we stopped on the way, was tense with expectations of a pogrom from retreating Ukrainians.

A meeting of the Kehila with our participation was arranged by its president, the student Yampolsky. This able young fellow in a few well-chosen words, appraised the Americans about the situation in the city and the surrounding towns. Like all over the Ukraine, the need for relief was great. During his talk Yampolsky in veiled language let it be understood that another pogrom in Mohilev-Podolsk would be met with resistance from the well organized Hagana. He made the remark, that this is not Proskurov—"for one Jew murdered, two Gaidamacks would be killed." As if in answer to Yampolsky's words a report was received that an incident happened while the Kehila was in session. A Gaidamack on horseback was passing through the deserted streets. When he noticed a lonely Jew hurrying toward a house the Gaidamack raced toward him and started to beat him with a whip. Suddenly a shot rang out and the Gaidamack fell dead from his horse. Immediately a band of about 30-40 Gaidamacks galloped through the empty streets, stopping only to pick up the dead soldier. A friendly peasant reported that it was Ataman Tutunik's band, bivouacked outside the city. From talks with the Gaidamacks the peasant learned that they were waiting for the Americans to leave to start a pogrom. Other rumors brought the news that the Red Army broke through the front in a few places, and the road to Kamenetz-Podolsk was not passable. Yampolsky closed the meeting and began arrangements for us to cross the Dniestr into Rumania. There we would try to reach Kamenetz-Podolsk by way of the city of Chotin. Within an hour word was received by telephone from Bukarest that the Americans may cross the river, they may include the Polish chauffeur and their secretary. Professor Friedlander suggested we stay overnight, as there was no danger for the city, as long as the Americans were still there. In the morning word was received



Post street in Kamenetz-Podolsk in 1913

that the Gaidamacks were still waiting a few miles from the city, but that the Red Army did not advance toward Kamenetz-Podolsk and the road was passable. Dr. Leff fashioned from a sheet, a white flag, which was attached to the automobile on one side with the large American flag on the other side. It was decided to confront the Ukrainian band and try to persuade them not to molest the Jews in Mohilev-Podolsk. As a precaution I was given Dr. Leff's spare uniform so that it would look as if there were no other witnesses, but the Americans. We bid farewell to the representatives of the Kehila and left Mohilev-Podolsk. A few miles from the city we encountered Tutunick's band. Having been coached by the delegates I addressed the Ataman and his troops in Ukrainian. I explained that a bolshevik, a traitor, hiding in the city shot the innocent Gaidamack, who peacefully was passing through the main street. I told them that the city commandant and the chief of police are of the same opinion and are searching for the murderer, although it's most likely that he escaped from the city. We want them to know, that the American Government will not tolerate any further pogroms on Jews in the Ukraine. I called their attention to a speech recently made by Petliura, who said, that any Ukrainian making riots, menacing

or hurting Jews is a traitor to a free, anti-bolshevik Ukraine. I pointed out, that they are needed right now at the front to fight the bolsheviks and should leave the peaceful Jews alone. I told them, that the war Minister a few days ago, gave us passes and told us that he demands co-operation from every commander of an Ukrainian military detachment. But the best argument was Professor Friedlander's peace offering. He handed the Ataman 10 five dollar gold pieces, which were, as I explained, to buy cigarettes for his soldiers.

The Ataman talked in whispers to his troops for a few minutes, then addressed us. He assured us that he and his soldiers were only interested in fighting the bolsheviks and never intended to harm the Jews. Now, that they have rested they will be on the way to the front to fight for the liberation of the Ukraine. He thanked us for the present and after shaking hands with each of us told us to proceed by way of Murovani-Kirilowzi and Dunaievitz to Kamenetz-Podolsk. This way we would avoid bolshevik patrols. We hoped for the best for the Jews of Mohilev-Podolsk and left the Tutunick band. Toward evening Professor Friedlander stopped the car; it was time for the evening prayers (Mincha-Maariv). He said them quietly, facing the East. Regardless of the religious feelings the rest of us, even the Polish chauffeur, were grateful to Friedlander for praying. We were not sure whom we might encounter on our way. We stopped in Murovani-Kurilowtzi where the scars of war and pogroms were visible in the shabby clothing, worn by Jews, but mainly in the faces of the people. The entire town came with the local committee; they cried with joy that American Jews did not forget them: "if only we could all go with you to America now" . . .

We traveled in the darkness and quiet of the Summer night, that did not betray the dangers lurking only miles away. People were being killed on both sides in a civil war, Jews were listening in the stillness of the night, afraid that another pogrom might break out. We traveled without any incidents until we arrived in Kamenetz-Podolsk, not

suspecting that before another night would arrive, one of us would be dead.

Before I went to my home, Professor Friedlander told me that I should be ready to leave with him for America. My feeble excuses, that it's hard in such times to leave the family, that I want to finish my education, that I have to publish my book about the pogroms the Professor brushed aside, reminding me that any Jew in Murovani-Kurilowitzi or anywhere else in the Ukraine would be happy to change places with me. I rushed home to get ready to leave for America, to be with the family for the last few hours of that night.

In the morning I learned that another American, Dr. Cantor, arrived with money for the local relief committee and with instructions for the delegation of the J. D. C. to return at once to Warsaw. Information at the Warsaw office of the J. D. C. had it, that the Petliura army would not be able to hold out much longer and that the Red Army was ready for an advance into Poland.

I said good-by to my family and to the many friends who came to wish me god-speed on my trip to America. I hurried to the home of Kleiderman, where the Americans were staying. Professor Friedlander was in good spirits, he even told me not to worry about my book, he'd help me publish it in Yiddish and English, he'd see that I finish my education in Engineering and for the Fall he'd take me along to Palestine for a visit.

It was decided for the delegation to split: one car with Professor Friedlander and Dr. Cantor would leave at once by way of Gusatin and the rest of us would follow in another car, as soon as we'd finish our visit to the War Ministry.

The War Minister was at the Front and the General in charge immediately asked us to come to his office. Instead of Yiddish, usually used between us, Mr. Kass spoke in Russian and I translated into Ukrainian. The General assured

us that the situation was not as critical as the Poles liked to paint it. He was positive, that there would not be any further retreats. He assured us, that there would not be any pogroms, because Petliura sentenced a number of anti-Jewish agitators to be shot. Mr. Kass was very emphatic in explaining that the American and European public opinion would not accept the Ukrainian explanations. It was not infiltrated bolsheviks who made pogroms. The Americans now saw the results of pogroms and learned on the spot the true facts. In the middle of our conversation an officer came in and whispered something to the general. The General vividly shaken told us that he received very sad news. A Red Army patrol ambushed and killed Professor Friedlander and Dr. Cantor near the town of Yarmolinetz. The patrol of the Buddeny cavalry did not pay attention to the American Flag or the J. D. C. uniforms which were unlike the Ukrainian or Polish. The Polish chauffeur was seen running into the woods. The Jews of Yarmolinetz brought the bodies to town for burial. The General assured us that there was no imminent danger for Kamenetz-Podolsk, because the main force of the Red Army was being pushed back; only isolated patrols slipped through the Ukrainian lines. Nevertheless, he advised us to leave by way of Orinin to Galicia. There we met the chauffeur of the Friedlander car, who told us in detail, how Professor Friedlander and Dr. Cantor were assassinated in the morning of July 5th, 1920.

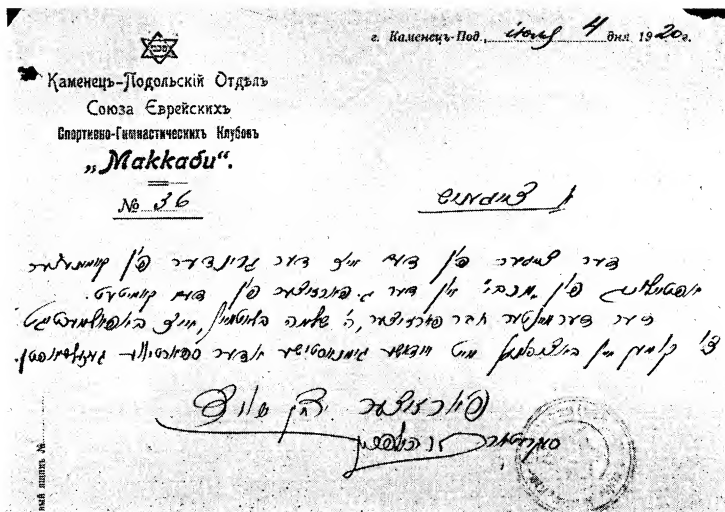
We proceeded to Warsaw; there Dr. Leff was given another assignment by the local office; Mr. Kass went to Sweden to try to get permission to enter the Ukraine by way of Moscow and I left for Paris and New York. I had the sad mission to describe to the widow and children of the late Professor Friedlander the details of the last few weeks of his life, when I traveled with the Professor in the Ukraine, till the fateful July 5, 1920, when he was brutally assassinated.

Pinchos Krasny, the Minister of Jewish Affairs

The History of the National Personal Autonomy and the selection of the Jewish Ministers to administer this autonomy is described in the book by the first Minister of Jewish Affairs, Dr. Silberfarb.

I will tell about the last Jewish Minister in the Ukraine. It was when Petliura's cabinet was in Kamenetz-Podolsk from June to November 1919. Unlike the other three Ministers of Jewish affairs, who were delegated by their parties for the post, Krasny became Minister by accident. Pinchos Krasny was in charge of the general department of the Jewish Ministry under Revutsky. When the Petliura Government fled from Kiev in January 1919 under the pressure of the bolsheviks, Revutsky handed his resignation to Petliura. As a temporary, acting Minister Revutsky left Pinchos Krasny. All the central committees of Jewish political parties remained in Kiev and Petliura could not get a candidate approved by one of the Jewish minority socialist parties, as was done in the past. On the way toward exile in Poland, Petliura's government could not be without a Minister of Jewish Affairs: it would look very bad diplomatically. It was at the time when in America and in Europe news of the pogroms by the Ukrainians aroused public opinion. A Minister of Jewish Affairs, a member of the cabinet, would be the best proof, that Petliura's Government was not responsible for the pogroms. There was no time to consult Jewish leaders and Petliura appointed Krasny in place of the resigned Revutsky.

Since 1918 the Ukrainian Jews suffered from pogroms by the Petliura Army, by independent Ukrainian partisans under the leadership of self-proclaimed Atamans and by the army of General Denikin. Krasny, now the Minister of Jewish Affairs, was confronted with the dilemma: should he resign and leave the government or should he remain and do whatever is in his power to prevent further pogroms and alleviate the suffering of the pogroms' victims? This problem tortured every politically minded Jew. All Jewish



Credentials by Kamenetz-Podolsk branch of Federation of Jewish Sport Clubs "Maccabee"

political parties were for a free, anti-communist Ukraine, but this was in theory. In practice every Jew knew that the Ukrainians were killing innocent Jews, including those who were anti-communists and were for a free Ukraine. It went so far that Jews, remaining anti-bolshevik, were waiting for the Red Army to liberate them from the Ukrainian pogrom makers.

This problem was acute in Kamenetz-Podolsk and in parts of Podolia and Wolin, where the retreating army of Petliura staged the worst pogroms, like those in Proskurov, Feldstin, Kitaigerod and others. After a short stay in Galicia the Ukrainian Army returned, and again started pogroms on Jews. On return to the Ukraine the government stayed temporarily in Kamenetz-Podolsk. The first act of the Jewish ministry was to requisition the building of the Zionist Club for its offices. It could be, that Krasny was not even informed of that, because a number of things were done in his name by Mr. Dankner, the very efficient General office manager. Dankner recruited a staff for the office among young Jews in Kamenetz-Podolsk. The writer

of this, because of being proficient in Yiddish and Ukrainian, was asked to serve as assistant to Dankner, an important but non-political post. During the next few months I had an opportunity to study Pinchos Krasny and the people with whom he surrounded himself. Nobody cared about the politics of the staff workers, f.i., we all knew that Mr. Messer, the manager of the cultural department was a communist and was waiting for an opportunity to skip over the front to the bolsheviks. Volodia Nirenberg from Proskurov, a student and ardent Zionist was working listed as secretary, but really being chauffeur for Krasny. Krasny was very careful about the politics of the policy makers with whom he surrounded himself. His confidential secretary and advisor was Mr. Tumim, a distant relative and member of the Folks-Party, who was together with Krasny active in the party in Kiev. When Tumim was not available, Dankner did the work of the first secretary, but I doubt that he enjoyed the same confidence. Once, when Tumim and Dankner were dispatched to Kazatin to see if they could prevent a pogrom there, I was in line to perform Dankner's duties. I had to see Krasny in his cabinet on official business. During those few days I went to Krasny for signatures, with questions about some papers and to answer inquiries pertaining to some matters. At all times Krasny remained the silent, non-communicating, serious man. During the months that Krasny spent in Kamenetz-Podolsk he was known to very few Jews in the city; he was very seldom seen anywhere in an unofficial capacity; even some of the office workers hardly ever saw him. His appearance was dignified—a handsome man in the forties with a black Herzlian beard, somberly dressed and unsmiling he looked more the Minister than many of his colleagues in the Cabinet. Dankner, a bachelor himself, told me, that Krasny was never married, came from a middle class business family in Kazatin, was a very effective speaker at meetings in Kiev, and was in high esteem by the intellectuals, Jews and Ukrainians alike.

In Kamenetz-Podolsk Krasny did not show any signs of a changed policy toward Zionists and Zeire-Zion. From



Каме́нецъ-Подольскъ
Kamjeniec-Pod.

Бульварная улица.
Bulwarua ulica.

Bulvarnaia Street in Kamenetz-Podolsk in 1910

the very beginning Krasny made contact with the leaders of the Jewish Socialist parties, although he probably was appraised of the fact that they hardly had any followers. He befriended the lawyer Jacob Kreiss, a non-party man, who was a friend of some socialists. Krasny appointed Mr. Kreiss, as head of the General Department of the Ministry, a position Krasny held under Revutsky. Tumim called together a number of tradesmen, small shopkeepers and turned the meeting into an organizational assembly of a new branch of the Folks-Party and Mr. Kreiss was elected the head of this newly born party. Now Krasny at last had a semblance of a party to support him. Although it would have been preposterous to claim that he had a mandate from the Folks-Party to be Minister.

Dankner was moved up as a special secretary. I was elevated to Dankner's place. In a way, Kreiss became my superior, although he hardly ever spent any time in the office.

With the help of Jacob Kreiss, a Jewish Ministerial Council was established. The Council consisted of the Directors of the Ministry's departments and a few consultants.

The leaders of the Jewish Socialist Parties received appointments at the Ministry: Israel Drachler, as director of Educational Department; A. Gumener, as director of Community (Kehilas) department; Bograd, as director of Rehabilitation Department. Besides the above, Broitman, Alter, Pistrak, and a few others were made members of the council, where policy was decided. It's worthwhile to notice that Drachler, Guminer, Bograd and company were the same group which collaborated with the bolsheviks only a few weeks before, when the Red Army occupied the city. These representatives of the Jewish Socialist Parties, who now professed fidelity to the Petliura regime and acted as staunch anti-bolsheviks, nevertheless helped the bolsheviks to abolish the legally elected democratic Jewish Community Council (Kehila). Under Petliura's regime, by the law of the National Personal Autonomy, the Kamenetz-Podolsk Kehila was functioning again. Under the leadership of Munia Zack, a Zionist, and Fradkin, a Zerire-Zion, the Kehila reaffirmed the non-cooperation with Pinchos Krasny.

The Kehila in Kamenetz-Podolsk went further, it assumed temporarily the functions of the Central Committee of Communities (Kehilas) until Kiev would be liberated and the elected committee would resume its leadership of Ukrainian Jewry. A circular letter was sent to Kehilas in cities and towns to ignore the Jewish Ministry, to communicate with the Kamenetz-Podolsk Kehila in all communal matters. The Kehila was also responsible for organizing a relief committee to help the pogrom victims.

Naturally, the Ministerial Council of Pinchos Krasny took counter measures to hinder the work of the Kamenetz-Podolsk Kehila. Krasny received from Petliura's Government funds to help the pogrom victims as well as smaller sums for Jewish education and for other communal needs. Using the money, as bait, the Jewish Socialists of the Ministry tried to get Kehilas in smaller towns to deal with the Ministry, instead of the Kamenetz-Podolsk Kehila. Only Yiddish schools received subsidies, ignoring the fact, that Hebrew schools and "evening classes" for the study of

Hebrew had the majority of students. In many ways, the Jewish Socialist parties received direct and indirect subsidies.

A relief committee to help the pogrom sufferers was founded at the Ministry of Jewish Affairs. Again Krasny appointed, as members of this committee the same people, who served on his advisory council. This relief committee sent instructors into the provincial towns and cities to organize the distribution of relief funds. In each place the instructor would seek out a Jewish Socialist or just an anti-zionist and appoint him as head of the local relief committee.

Krasny himself had little time left for doing the work of a Minister of Jewish affairs, namely work to strengthen the National Personal Autonomy. Instead he was busy dealing with the different members of the cabinet and with the higher military officers trying to prevent pogroms, wherever a threat of such occurred. And the threat of pogroms happened daily: first, in recently occupied places under the excuse of weeding out Red Army sympathizers, in reality arresting just Jewish men and women. Second, during a retreat when an excuse was needed for the defeat at the front. The usual thing was to blame the Jews in supposedly helping the Red Army. The excuse for a pogrom was stupid, when the Jews were accused in helping the Reds to surround the Ukrainians and force the retreat. In all honesty, it must be admitted that the higher military echelons used every measure at their command to avoid pogroms during the last few months in their struggle with the Red Army. A great influence in this direction was exerted by the Galician-Ukrainian intellectuals, who joined Petliura's Army. But above all, Pinchos Krasny deserves credit for his unceasing efforts to prevent pogroms by using his position, as a member of Petliura's cabinet.

How the Jewish Ministry saved Jewish lives can be seen from the following incident. Krasny personally was not involved, but his subordinates, acting as though they were authorized by him, rescued a Jewish boy, practically, from the firing squad.

In the spring of 1919, the disorganized Ukrainian Army was fleeing toward Poland (Galicia), to escape from the Red Army. The high Ukrainian Command was directing the military unit, wherever possible, to go westward through Ukrainian villages, avoiding Jewish towns and cities. The officers school, with a few hundred well-equipped and disciplined cadets, was allowed to enter Kamenetz-Podolsk on the way to Galicia.

In the city, ready to be evacuated remained some high officials of the Petliura Government. Nevertheless, the atmosphere in the city was uneasy. Jews were afraid that a minor incident would start a pogrom. It was on a Friday evening when a tall handsome, blonde, blue-eyed Gaidamack (Petliura's soldier) stopped me with an offer to sell me military equipment. I immediately thought that it might be a provocation to accuse me and the Jews in general of buying Government supplies and corrupting the soldiers. I took out my documents and told the soldier, that as a student of the Ukrainian University, I would not dream of buying government property. The soldier, in turn, took out his documents showing that he too was a student of the University of Kiev; that he was originally from the town of Megbige and was a cadet, but also a Jew. His name was David Brandman. I told him that he was joking, probably found the documents, because it is unlikely for a Jew to be a cadet of Petliura's officers' school.

Brandman rummaged through his papers and brought out a photograph of himself with another student. I immediately recognized Wolodia Nirenberg from Proskurov. Brandman told me that I could recognize his likeness from the photograph and that the other student is his cousin. I invited Brandman to our house. In the presence of my parents, Brandman related an almost incredible story.

He arrived in Proskurov to visit his cousin while Semensenko's pogrom, the slaughter of Jews, was in progress. Nobody touched him, because his appearance was so un-Jewish. Brandman went to the railroad station and hopped into a departing train. He was appalled by the sight of



Membership card of "Hazomir" dramatic club in
Kamenetz-Podolsk

innocent Jews, young and old, being hacked to pieces by Gaidamacks. Then and there he decided that Jews must join the Ukrainian Army, and that will stop pogroms on Jews. He talked to an officer on the train, who turned out to be the Commandant of the officers' school. He enrolled Brandman in the school as a cadet, promised to send him on a recruiting mission to get Jews into Petliura's army. After a couple of weeks' training, Brandman with the rest of the cadets was sent into a battle with the Red Army near Vinitza. Two days later, Brandman and three other cadets were decorated for bravery by Petliura himself.

Brandman showed us Petliura's citation. After supper Brandman left to join his military comrades. Soon after he returned. While we talked, the Ukrainian-military and civilians in a hurry left the city. It seemed that the city was surrounded by a detachment of the Red Army. During the next few weeks, dressed again as a student, Brandman stayed in our house. The bolsheviks stayed only a few weeks.

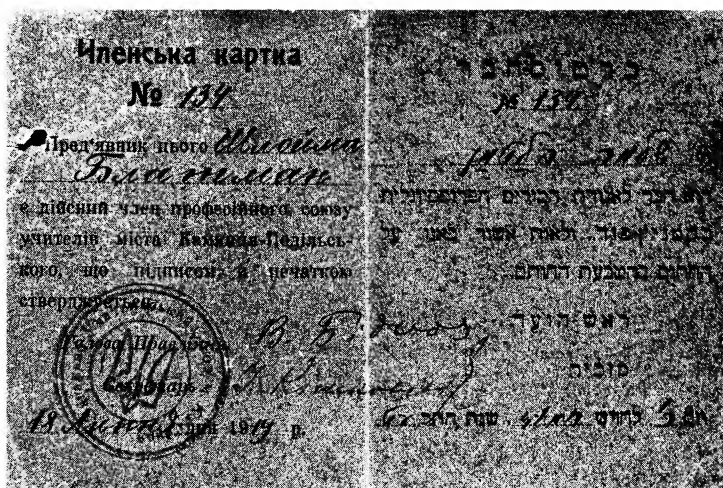
After the Red Army evacuated the city the Ukrainians again occupied Kamenetz-Podolsk, starting their advance toward Kiev. Brandman decided to leave for his hometown to decide, whether to rejoin the officers' school or not.

In the morning, a stranger, a Jew came to our house with a short message: "Your friend, David Brandman was arrested at the railroad station." The witness saw an officer talking to a student, who was surrounded by soldiers, as if under arrest. The student suddenly called out in Yiddish: "Tell Blatman that David Brandman is being led away to be executed!" I immediately contacted Volodia Nirenberg; in Pinchos Krasny's limousine we drove to the railroad station. There the military commandant talked to us only when we insisted that we were representatives of the Minister of Jewish Affairs, a member of Petliura's government. His story was short: the Commandant of the officer's school on the way to the front spotted a deserter, a cadet who had the audacity to say, that he is on the way to rejoin his military school. The prisoner insisted, that he was left behind in Kamenetz-Podolsk when an unannounced evacuation took place. Now, the deserter is confined in the military prison and, probably, will be executed in a couple of hours, after a court-martial.

We immediately went to the military prison, which was in the building of the "Belanowskaia" School on the Polish Folvarek. Again, showing our documents, we insisted that we represent the Jewish Minister and demanded postpone-ment of the court-martial. We insisted that Brandman could prove that he, as a soldier, with a medal from Petliura, was not a deserter.

The senior officer had to admit that he had no written, only an oral report and assured us that Brandman's case would not be hurried. We then secured the assistance of Jacob Kreiss, my boss, at the Ministry. Kreiss called the Minister of Justice and, after an exchange of letters between the Jewish Ministry and the War Ministry, Brandman's case was transferred to Civilian Jurisdiction. Finally, Brandman was released in my custody.

Needless to say, the case never reached the court, because the commandant of the school could not be reached. Later, it was officially established, that the officer was killed in action at the front. The case of David Brandman was



Membership card of Teacher's Union in Kamenetz-Podolsk

closed. Who knows how many Jewish lives were saved due to the intervention of Pinchos Krasny, as Minister of Jewish Affairs?

The Wedding at the Cemetery

(This story is authentic. It was verified by talking to a number of people [including A. Melman], who were present at the event.)

While Kamenetz-Podolsk was, in many ways, equal to the progress of the 20th Century, in other respects it retained the superstitions of the middle ages. One of such superstitions is manifested in the following event:

In 1916, during the First World War, in the city of Kamenetz-Podolsk, an epidemic of typhus was out of control. The few doctors, who were not mobilized into the Army, were helpless to cope with thousands of sick and dying people. There were no medicines for the civilian sick and no available hospital beds, which were all occupied by sick and wounded soldiers from the nearby front. All nurses were mobilized and none left for the city. The grave diggers could not prepare enough graves for the dead.

In such atmosphere, not only superstitious, but rational, lucid people were ready to try anything to break the epidemic. Someone started an old tale, that if a couple should be married within the gates of the cemetery, the epidemic would cease.

The superstitious among the Jewish population started a search and found a boy and girl willing to get married at the cemetery. It is not hard to assume that the young, poor couple lured to have their marriage ceremony performed at the cemetery were of low intelligence. They were promised wedding presents and in no time, all arrangements for the wedding were ready. The rabbi, against his better judgment, agreed to perform the marriage ceremony inside the gates of the cemetery in the presence of a large crowd of wedding guests. As was the custom at every wedding, here too, the names of the donors and the amounts of the presents were publicly announced.

The new couple collected a sizeable amount and departed to an apartment provided by a Mrs. Melman, who had a vacancy in her house. The wedding ended with the music playing the traditional "Freilachs," but it is hard to believe that anybody actually danced at this sad wedding.

It seems, that in spite of the hopes that the wedding would end the typhus epidemic, no improvement was noticed. On the contrary, the next year in addition to the typhus, the region was swept by the "Spanish Flu," killing hundreds of the city's population. At the time, thousands of war prisoners were coming back from Germany, Austria, and Hungary. Many were sick with the influenza, but with superhuman effort, were dragging themselves to reach their homeland. It was pathetic to see them arrive in Kamenetz-Podolsk, kneel and kiss the ground of their motherland, then fall over dead.

Kamenetz-Podolsk in the first quarter of the 20th Century reached to high cultural standards, and in the same time was still deep in superstitions, as shown by the story of the Wedding at the Cemetery.

**WHO IS WHO
AMONG
KAMENETZER**

Zvee Scooler



Zvee Schooler

Zvee Scooler is the most distinguished personality to come to this country from Kamenetz-Podolsk. He is a celebrity widely known for his activity in theatre, radio, television and Jewish cultural life.

Zvee came to the United States with his family when he was thirteen years old. As a Yeshiva student at the Rabbi Jacob Joseph School he continued his studies of the Bible, the Talmud, and the Hebrew language, excelling in these studies as well, as in English and the other required high school subjects.

Joining the Jewish Art Theatre as a young man, Zvee proved to be a born actor. He displayed great talent and rare acting versatility playing a wide range of parts from youths to bearded men. After his triumphs on the Yiddish stage, Zvee felt the challenge of the English Theatre and Broadway. Here again he met with success. He acted in the hit shows "She Loves Me Not," "We Americans," "Forward March," and "The Theatre of Peretz." Currently he is playing in "Fiddler on the Roof." His performance in this show has received the critical acclaim of the New York press, both English and Yiddish.

Zvee has had numerous television appearances, and he has played in both Yiddish and English movies, the most current being "The Pawnbroker" and "Andy." As the brilliant "Grammeister" on radio station WEVD's Sunday morning "Forward Hour," he has endeared himself to the Jewish radio audiences, young and old.

Zvee has always been intensely interested in making Jewish culture a living heritage for young people. First, as a Hebrew teacher, then as camp director of Camp Kindervelt, he inspired countless young people to learn about Jewish Culture and to study Jewish and Hebrew. He is also active in many cultural and charitable organizations, giving freely of his time and talents.

Zvee Scooler's warm outgoing personality makes everyone who comes into contact with him feel, as though, he has gained a friend.

Morris J. (Moische Yoina) Kaplun



Morris J. Kaplun

left the Ukraine and went into the textile business. Before the start of the Second World War, Morris, his wife and son came to New York where he successfully continued in business.

His practical work for Palestine started in 1933, when Morris was on a visit there to investigate the textile business. Instead of doing business with Palestine, Kaplun became a large contributor to the upbuilding of the country. His first deed was to plant a mile of trees. During the 1948 Liberation War, Kaplun sent an ambulance to Israel for the Mogen David Adom. Since then, he donated three more ambulances. In 1959, Morris and his late wife Betty, endowed an auditorium for 180 students to the Tel Aviv University and established a scholarship fund of \$10,000.

His biggest contributions in Israel have been made since the death of his wife and of his only son. In memory of his wife, Kaplun built a Youth Center in Kfar Ata. In memory of his son, the young distinguished scientist, Dr. Saul

Kaplun, the father recently dedicated two institutions: at the Tel-Aviv University, the Institute of Applied Mathematics and Space Physics and at the Jerusalem University—the Institute of Applied Mathematics and Theoretical Physics.

In recognition of his devotion to Israel, the Labor Zionist Farband gave Morris Kaplun a testimonial dinner. The large auditorium of the Hotel Pierre was filled with hundreds of his friends. Kaplun, who has been buying Israeli Bonds every year on this occasion purchased \$20,000 in bonds; following his example the assembled bought \$80,000 more.

Leon Solomon (Schloimo) Blatman



**Mr. and Mrs. Leon S.
Blatman**

Leon, born in Kamenetz-Podolsk, studied in High schools and at the University in Kamenetz and in Odessa. He continued his education upon arrival in New York in 1920, at C.C.N.Y. (engineering) and at L. I. University (pharmacy) and since graduation still practices his profession of pharmacy.

Since early youth, Leon showed a talent as an organizer and ability in writing and public speaking. In 1912 he organized a secret student Zionist society. After the 1917 Revolution, Leon became very active in the Zeire-Zion party, founded the Zionist sport club

“Maccabee,” and was secretary of the students council (Rada) at the local University. In 1919 he worked at the ministry of Jewish Affairs under Pinchos Krasny; a year later, as secretary to the late Professor Israel Friedlander of the J.D.C. Leon left for America. In New York he was associated with the poet Menachem Boreischo in the publicity department of the Joint Distribution Committee. While studying at C.C.N.Y., Leon wrote for the Jewish Newspaper “The Day” and was a contributor to the Zeire-Zion party magazine “Far’n Folk.” In 1923 he married Sylvia Rosenblatt, bought a pharmacy and settled in Brooklyn.

Writing became Leon’s hobby. For many years he was a contributor to a number of pharmaceutical publications; for seven years he was editorial board member and feature writer for “1199 Drug News.” He also wrote two books and for a year was editor of the “Hudson Herald” in New

Rochelle. At the end of the Second World War Leon founded the Kamenetz-Podolsk Relief Organization of which he was president for three years. In 1952 the Blatmans moved to New Rochelle, where they opened a pharmacy.

Sylvia Blatman (Rosenblatt) was born in Kamenetz-Podolsk to religious, but modern parents. The Rosenblatts were of the first to join the Zionist organization and brought up their children in the Zionist spirit. As a child Sylvia belonged to the "Hatchia" and to the "Beth Am," where she studied Hebrew. She finished her secondary education in Kamenetz-Podolsk and in New York she supplemented it by taking courses at Hunter College. All her married life Sylvia is working side by side with Leon in the pharmacy. Due to her magnetic personality and her way with people Sylvia gained hundreds of friends in New York and in New Rochelle.

In New York, as in New Rochelle, Sylvia is active in Hadassah, where she held many important offices and where she is a life member. Together with Leon she was very active in the Kamenetz-Podolsk Relief and was responsible for bringing the Leff family from a concentration camp to America.

The Blatmans are very proud of their daughter Florence, their son-in-law Alex and their three grandchildren.

Samuel Drachler



**Samuel, Lottie, and
Louis Drachler**

In 1915 the Drachler family was exiled from their home near the Galician border by the Czarist government. The family settled in Kamenetz - Podolsk, where the older son, Louis helped the father in business, while the younger son, Samuel, continued his education.

Samuel joined an illegal Zionist youth group and after the 1917 Revolution became very active in a few organizations. He helped organize the sport club "Maccabee" and played on the football team. He showed talent in acting in a newly-formed dramatic society, even directing a few plays. He joined a Chalutzim group planning to leave for Palestine, but was prevented from fulfilling his plan by the Rumanian police, while illegally crossing the border.

In May 1919, as an auxiliary policeman, Samuel took part in the "March on Orinin" where in a pitched battle with a Petliura's military detachment, his friend, Avner Korman was killed.

When the Drachlers came to Canada, Samuel and Louis helped organize a branch of the Labor Zionist Farband. After 5 years in Canada, Louis and Samuel came to New York. Here they were engaged in a number of business ventures. Samuel tried to continue his theatrical hobby by attending the Dramatic School of Modern Art. He also enrolled in the Jewish Teachers Institute.

In 1940 Samuel, who was already married to Lottie, settled in New Jersey, where he was engaged in poultry farming. In 1951 Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Drachler visited

Israel and their relatives there. On their return, the Drachlers intensified their work for Israel. Lottie Drachler became the chairlady for the Israeli Bonds of the Lakewood Leah Rosenstein Branch of the Pioneer Women. Lottie distinguished herself by work and leadership. In recognition for their community work and activity in the Bond Drive, a testimonial dinner was given for Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Drachler and Mr. Louis Drachler. The Drachlers proved to be worthy of the Zionist Tradition of the family.

Morris Schleifman



Morris and Celia Schleifman

Morris and Celia, both natives of Kamenetz - Podolsk, were married there shortly after the 1917 Revolution. Young Morris displayed business ability, but when the bolsheviks occupied the city, he realized that there was no future for an aspiring businessman in Kamenetz - Podolsk. Morris and Celia managed to escape to America.

In New York, Morris opened a small hand laundry and after years of hard work succeeded in enlarging his enterprise. Eventually, Morris became the owner of a five story building, where he had one of the larger

steam laundries.

During the Second World War two of the four sons of the Schleifmans served honorably in the American Armed Forces, while the younger sons continued their education. After the war, Schleifman sold his business and went into real estate in Rockland County, where he made his home for some time in Congers.

From the early days in New York Morris became very active in Branch 15 of the Jewish Labor Zionist Farband. He showed ability in leadership and became an outstanding speaker for the organization. In recognition of his work the Farband celebrated Morris's 50th birthday with a banquet to which many members and friends came to pay their respects.

Morris is responsible for a number of projects for the Histadruth and is also very active in the Kamenetz-Podolier Relief organization, of which he is now the President.

Morris is also a charter member of Rockland County Chapter of B'nai-B'rith. Celia and Morris are very proud of their four married sons and grandchildren. Celia Schleifman won recognition among the Pioneer Women for her activities in the New York and Spring Valley chapters of the Zionist Women Labor Organization. Together with Morris, Celia is working for the Kamenetz-Podolier Relief Organization, which is now building a clinic in Israel in memory of the Kamenetzer, who were annihilated by the Nazis.

Aaron Ashman



Aaron Ashman

Ashman was born in Balin, a town not far from Kamenetz-Podolsk. His traditional Jewish education was supplemented by private tutors and attending lectures at the University in Kamenetz - Podolsk. Here he spent the first three years of the Revolution of 1917. While working as a Hebrew teacher, Ashman was engaged in cultural activities and was a dynamic force in turning a great number of the youth in Kamenetz - Podolsk into Hebrew activists. He was also occupied in organizing

the Hagana to fight the Petliura pogrom bandits. He was one of the heroes who went to the nearby town of Orinin and fought a pitched battle with a Petliura regiment, which was believed to be making a pogrom in that town. Although the Hagana had only a small contingent at the time, nevertheless, they killed sixty Petliura soldiers with only one Jewish casualty. Two weeks later the Petliura army entered Kamenetz-Podolsk and made a pogrom with dozens of Jews killed and maimed.

During his youth Ashman wrote, but did not publish his literary efforts. Only after 1921, when he settled in Palestine was Ashman recognized as a writer. In time Ashman became the outstanding Israeli playwright, whose dramas, comedies and other plays were staged by the "Habima" and "Heohel" in Israel, in America, Argentina and Canada. Two of Ashman's works, the trilogy "This Land" and "Saul's Daughter" won prizes in Israel and in other countries.

Ashman translated from Yiddish into Hebrew Mendele's "Menachem Mendel the Dreamer" and "The Travels

of Benjamin the Third”; also some of the works of Sholom Aleichem and other classics.

Ashman achieved recognition among writers, especially for his work on the copyright law.



Maurice Kass, editor of "Jewish World" in Philadelphia. In 1926 Kass, together with Prof. Israel Friedlander and Dr. M. Leff, came to Kamenetz-Podolsk, as a relief mission of the J.D.C. Kass also was the delegate of the Ukranian Jews of America.

IN MEMORIAM

Solomon Dorfman



Solomon Dorfman

Solomon was born in 1897 to a rich family, owners of a mill and wholesale dealers in flour. Before entering the Commercial High School, Solomon received a traditional Jewish education and was tutored in Russian privately.

As a youngster Solomon joined a secret students' Zionist Society, and even then he showed inclination to conservatism, ability to compromise and the gift of diplomacy. During the First World War, Solomon lived in Elizavetgrad when his school was evacuated to that city. There Solomon's interest in Zionism was further influ-

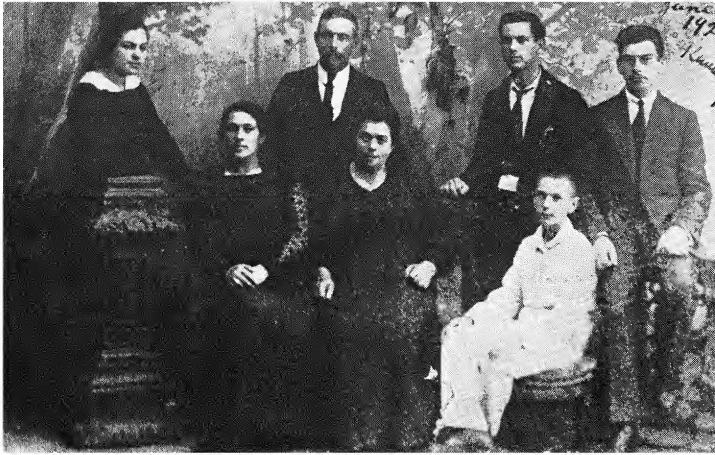
enced by the renown Zionist, the Engineer Tiomkin, who was also the teacher of religion at Solomon's school. After the 1917 Revolution, Solomon was studying at the Technological Institute in Ekaterinoslav. There he joined the Students Zionist organization "Hechover."

In 1919, Solomon married his childhood sweetheart Nunia Sadetsky. When the bolsheviks occupied Kamenetz-Podolsk the Dorfman's escaped to America. During the economic struggle of the first immigrant years Solomon tried real estate. Later he developed a fair insurance business and during the Second World War became successful in textiles. The Dorfman's gave their two daughters a Jewish education in the tradition of their parents.

During all their years in America, the Dorfman's were active in the Brooklyn Jewish Center, Nunia was also active

in Hadassah. Solomon and Nunia were very active in the Kamenetz-Podolier Relief organization from the very time of its founding. At first he was the treasurer and the last few years before he died, Solomon was the president of the Kamenetz-Podolier Relief.

Joseph Blatman (1874-1942)



Joseph Blatman and family

Joseph's father, Sholom Blatman was a distillery owner and an influential "chosid" in Kamenetz-Podolsk. When Joseph was a young child, his mother died, and he went to live with his aunt and uncle, the "shochit," in Smotrich. It was expected that Joseph would take over his uncle's position, but after receiving his "Smicha" Joseph went into business. He married Frima Koifman from the village Verbovetz and they opened a kosher restaurant in Kamenetz-Podolsk.

Joseph incurred the displeasure of his father when he denounced "chassidism" and joined the Zionist organization. It was Frima's ambition to have her children become professionals, and each of her children graduated from high school and some from the University. After the 1917 Revolution, Joseph, who was active in Zionism before, became a member of the Zeire-Zion party, was elected to the city council and to the Kehila.

By 1921, when his older son was in Rumania and the second one in America, Joseph decided that it was time to fulfill his zionist dream: He took his family to Palestine.

Joseph, with the help of a few young men from Kamenetz-Podolsk, built with his own hands his house in Tel-Aviv. When he was digging a well in the yard a landslide killed his younger son, Simcha, a 15 year old student of the high school "Herzlia." The shock was too much for the mother and after a few years in Palestine the Blatmans left for Brazil. But Joseph was not happy in that country and by 1934, he and Frima were back in Tel Aviv. Now Joseph was busy managing his married daughter's property in Palestine and taking part in the communal life in Tel-Aviv, where he died in 1942. After the end of the Second World War Frima joined her daughter's family in Rio de Janeiro, where she died in 1961.

The ambition of Joseph Blatman was fulfilled—he lived and died in the land of his dreams, in Eretz-Israel.

David Schleifer



David Schleifer

Schleifer was born in 1863 to poor parents in Kamenetz-Podolsk; he graduated from local high school. He worked his way through college and studied law at the Charkov University.

On becoming a lawyer Schleifer returned to Kamenetz-Podolsk. Here he was married and began a very successful law practice. He became known for his Zionist activities, which he started with the "Bilui," as a student.

After the first Zionist Congress, Schleifer organized five branches of the Zionists in Kamenetz-Podolsk, absorbing the former "Lovers of Zion." Working unceasingly in the city and in the province Schleifer succeeded in turning the Zionists of the district into a political power among the Jewish population. At a conference in Kamenetz-Podolsk Schleifer was elected to head the Zionists of the region and to cooperate with the Odessa and the Vilna Zionist Committees. As a leader among Zionists of Russia Schleifer was delegated to Zionist conferences and to World Zionist Congresses. During the first few years after the 1905 Revolution the Russian Government changed its attitude to Zionists—from friendly to hostile. In 1909 the local police raided Schleifer's home and office and confiscated all papers connected with his Zionist activities. All members of the city and the district Zionist committees were put on trial, as subversives. Schleifer in a brilliant defense gained the acquittal of the accused, but they were prohibited from further Zionist work. The organization ceased to exist and Schleifer devoted his energies to Jewish community work. In 1914 Schleifer moved to Kiev; there again he became known as a Zionist, as an able lawyer and leader in community affairs. After the 1917 Revolution Schleifer was again in the forefront of Zionist and general Jewish activities. He was a delegate to the Convention of Ukrainian

Jews, to the conference of Kehilas, to Zionist conventions and was elected as a member of the Kehila in Kiev. Recognizing his abilities the Government appointed Schleifer, as city Judge.

In 1918 when the Denikin's army occupied Kiev the counter revolutionary soldiers of General Denikin celebrated their temporary victory with a pogrom on Jews. Among the hundreds of innocent victims was David Schleifer, who was brutally murdered. At the age of 55 the brilliant career of David Schleifer was suddenly ended.

Israel Goldman



Israel Goldman

Born in Orinin, Goldman came to Kamenetz - Podolsk where he received the traditional education in Cheder and Yeshiva. He also studied Yiddish and Russian. Growing up in the home of his grandfather young Goldman was exposed to Zionism, which he practiced all his life. Goldman wrote poetry and published a volume "Ideal of Life." In recognition for his work for the community and for Zionism Schleifer appointed Goldman secretary of the city and district Zionists committees.

Goldman contributed to newspapers and wrote a column for the Odessa newspaper "Good Morning." Later he became the manager of the city office of "Eko," helping Jews to immigrate to North and South America. He wrote a series of articles about the lot of Jews forced to immigrate. In 1914, Goldman settled in Kiev where he was (underground) manager of the regional office of the Jewish National Fund. After the 1917 Revolution Goldman was elected president of the Kehila in Kiev. Goldman was active in Zionist and general Jewish organizations. But all activities were stopped by the bolsheviks, when they occupied Kiev. By 1922 Goldman succeeded in escaping to Palestine. Here, too, Goldman continued his communal and Zionist work. Together with Rabbi Mase he worked in the "Brith Harishonim" and also was a contributor to Israeli newspapers and magazines. Goldman organized the "committee of people from Kamenetz-Podolsk and environs" and helped prepare the publishing of the memorial book of the district in Hebrew.

Zalman Porath (Fradkin)



Zalman Fradkin

Born in Priluki, Fradkin arrived in Kamenetz-Podolsk after the 1917 Revolution. From then on he was very active in Zionist and community work until the bolsheviks occupied the city. Then Fradkin escaped to Rumania.

Thanks to Fradkin's energetic work, the Zeire-Zion Party in Kamenetz - Podolsk became the strongest party among the Jewish population of the city and the district. When Fradkin's ability, as an executive, was recognized he was elected manager of the Kamenetz-Podolsk Kehila. He held this position until the bolsheviks abolished the democratically elected Kehila. Outside of his work for the Zeire-Zion party and for the Kehila, Fradkin organized a co-operative; here his knowledge of the co-operative movement showed results and helped the poorer classes of the city to cope with the rampant inflation. By the end of 1920 Fradkin was in Kishinev, Rumania, where again he continued his fruitful work for the Zionists. In no time he acquired knowledge of Rumanian and became active with the American "Joint" and "Haias." He was very helpful to Jews, who escaped from the Ukraine, to proceed to Palestine or to America. While in Rumania Fradkin was a contributor to the Yidish publication "Unzer Zeit."

His life-long ambition to live in Palestine was finally achieved. After settling in Israel, Fradkin continued his activities for the community and, as an expert in co-operatives, devoted the rest of his life to that field.

Scholom Altman



Scholom Altman

He was born in Rogachin, Besarabia to a very religious, chassidic family. His early education he received in Chotin, but instead of becoming a chassid, like his father, he turned out to be a modern, progressive Jew and Zionist.

He married a young lady from Zvanitz and entered business there. Believing that a "Lover of Zion" should practice what he preached, Altman went to Palestine at the age of 25. He worked in the colony Rishon Lezion together with the pioneer Moishe

Smiliansky. After a few years Altman returned to Zvanitz, where he organized a modern Hebrew school and became its principal. In a few years "the Zvanitzer Talmud Tora" became famous throughout Podolia. Parents from near and far sent their children to Altman's school. Some famous Jewish leaders were alumni of the Zvanitzer Talmud Tora. Altman was an active Zionist and was a delegate to World Zionist Congresses and to conferences of Russian Zionists. In 1915, exiled from Zvanitz, Altman settled in Kamenetz-Podolsk, where he devoted himself to work for the community and for Zionism. He proved to be a very effective speaker for Zionist causes.

In 1921 Altman escaped from the bolsheviks to Jerusalem. There he became manager of a school and secretary of the district Talpot. After working in Tel-Aviv for a while Altman finally settled in Kriat Anovim among many of his former pupils and admirers. He was the unofficial mayor of the Kvutza, worked in his garden and in the library till he passed on at the age of 100.

Joshua Malchi (Schika Saltzman)



Joshua Saltzman

His life was devoted to the Hebrew language and to practicing of Zionism. From early childhood in his native Zwanitz he was exposed to the Zionist idea. As a young boy, Schika went to Palestine, where he studied at the Tel-Aviv "Herzlia" high school. In the Summer of 1914, while at home on vacation, Schika was prevented from returning to Palestine by the start of the First World War. Settled in Kamenetz-Podolsk in 1915, when the Jews from Zwanitz were exiled, Schika became a teacher of Hebrew. But he was more than that, he rallied a great part of the Jewish youth in Kamenetz-Podolsk around the "Beth-Am," the centre of Hebrew culture and the home of the secret Zionist organization. He also organized a group of Chalutzim which was one of the first to depart from the Ukraine after the War to Palestine. After the 1917 Revolution, Schika was one of the most active among the Zionists in Kamenetz-Podolsk. He possessed a great oratorical talent and was unequal in debates with anti-Zionists. In 1919 he led the Kamenetz-Podolier chalutzim to Palestine and helped organize the Kvutza "Kriat Anovim." The rest of his life he worked in "Kriat Anovim" making it one of the most progressive and prosperous kvutzas in Israel. As a monument to Schika's cultural activities "Kriat Anovim" dedicated their extensive library to his memory.

Meyer Oasrachi (Munia Zack)



Meyer Zack

As a child Munia came to Kamenetz-Podolsk from Kupin to live at the home of his aunt Mrs. Brodsky. There he was exposed to the Zionist idea. After he graduated from the Technical High school in Kamenetz-Podolsk Munia enrolled in the Psycho-Neurological Institute in Petrograd. The 1917 Revolution interrupted his studies and Munia came back to Kamenetz - Podolsk, where he married his cousin Miss Brodsky. Munia devoted his life to community and Zionist work.

Yet at school Munia showed a great talent in public speaking; as a worker for Zionism Munia proved to be an outstanding orator and a convincing debater. Munia proved his ability, as an executive after his election, as president of the Kamenetz-Podolier Kehila. Munia and his wife escaped from the Ukraine when the bolsheviks occupied the country. In Bassarabia (Rumania) Munia became affiliated with the World Zionist Organization and served in many capacities. In the interest of Zionist Funds Munia traveled in many European countries, but finally settled in Israel. His experience and talents were utilized by the Zionist Organization, for which he worked until his untimely death.

Mathis Sigal



Mathis Sigal

Sigal's father was a cantor in Kamenetz-Podolsk and gave his son the traditional education in Cheder and Yeshiva. When time came for Sigal to be drafted into the Czarist Army he escaped to Galicia. There he continued his education and fell under the spell of Zionism. On returning to his native Kamenetz-Podolsk after the 1917 Revolution, Sigal devoted all his time to Zionist and cultural work. He was a convincing speaker for Zionist causes and a forceful debater, an opponent of Jewish socialists. When the city was occupied by the bolsheviks Sigal escaped to Kishinev in Rumania. There he worked with the known Zionist leader, Dr. Bernstein-Cohen. Here he became very effective in the Zionist fund raising campaigns. He worked also for the American "Joint" and "Haias" helping the Jews escaping from the Ukraine on their way to Palestine or to America. In 1932 Sigal left for Palestine, where he was in charge of the "Keren Haisod" office in Tel-Aviv.

In Palestine Sigal was active in many communal undertakings and cultural organizations. He was the head of the organization of Kamenetzer and until his death worked for the Hebrew memorial book "Kamenetz-Podolsk."

Malka Milgrom Glassman



**Malka Milgrom
Glassman**

Malka Milgrom Glassman was born in 1900, the younger daughter of a winemaker, Moishe, and his wife, Bessie, of Kamenetz-Podolsk. Malka graduated the Marinskaia Gymnasia, and worked as a secretary.

A cousin of the Milgroms, Moishe Glassman of Sokoletz, came to stay with them. He entered the Kamenetz business world, and soon began to court the attractive Malka. The Milgroms had a very close, warm Jewish family life. They had sons Simon and Abraham, a daughter Sarah, and the youngest, Jacob.

Only the families of Simon and Jacob remain in Europe; Jacob is in Kharkov, a successful engineer, with a son, Michel.

Sarah married into the Bograd family, in the town of Nova-Seletz in Bassarabia, Rumania. Malka and Moishe Glassman spent part of their honeymoon with the Bograds in early 1921. Subsequently, the Bograds emigrated to Ecuador.

Of Simon's family we know little, except that he left Kamenetz to join his grandfather in Kishenev, was a wine merchant there. Much later, he returned to Kamenetz where he married, after Malka had left for Canada.

Abraham left Kamenetz to become a settler in Israel where he stayed for two years, before emigrating to Santiago, Chile, where he now lives with his family.

Soon after Malka and Moishe Glassman were married, they decided to join Mr. Glassman's brother, Izzy in Montreal, Canada, arriving May 16, 1921. The life of Malka

Glassman is the tale of the thousands of devoted Jewish women who emigrated to the New World in search of a new life. The new life started in the poverty of the slums of Montreal, where Moishe Glassman tried hard to make a living. Finally, in 1929, he found work in the town of Three Rivers, 100 miles from Montreal. After the tragic death of their second son, Saul, and severe injury to their third son, Abie, the Glassmans decided to leave Montreal for Three Rivers, with their sons, Alex, born in 1921 and Harry, born in 1928. Starting at the bottom in the difficult depression days, through hard work and sacrifice, Malka and Moishe built a home and a business. They always offered hospitality to any Jewish traveller who came to Three Rivers, no matter how meager the fare might have been. Two more sons were born, Izzy in 1932 and Louis in 1936.

The years of toil wasted away the tall beauty. Working with her husband in the store, and taking care of the family took all the strength and health of this devoted woman.

In 1947 Malka's brother, Jacob, who then lived in Siberia, wrote to the editor of this book, Leon S. Blatman, asking him to locate Malka, which Mr. Blatman was able to do. Malka was overjoyed to find the whereabouts of Jacob, and requested Mr. Blatman to try to locate her brother, Abraham, who was in Chile. Once again, Mr. Blatman was successful in locating a member of the far-flung Milgrom family. However, it was too late for Malka. She succumbed to cancer in May 1948.

Malka Milgrom Glassman lives on in the lives of her children, all of whom are successful in their chosen fields. Alex., an engineer, lives in New York with his wife, Florence Blatman Glassman and their three children; Harry, an architect, lives in Montreal with his wife, Nushia Glait Glassman and their daughter; Izzy is in the insurance field and lives in Montreal with his wife Doreen Acker Glassman and their two children; and Louis, still single, runs the family business in Three Rivers.



The Glassman family

Pinchos Wolfenson



Pinchos Wolfenson

The family of Pinchos Wolfenson was very close to the family of his brother Chaim. Both were born in Kamenetz - Podolsk, both were married there, both families had four children each, both families had to flee from the city and settle in America: Pinchos came to New York, while Chaim went to Argentina. The brothers became in-laws, when the cousins Isidore and Charlotte were married.

In Kamenetz-Podolsk Pinchos had a business unusual for city Jews. He would rent from a large estate owner a quarry and supply builders with stone and gravel for construction work. In the Winter, when these activities were terminated by the weather, some of his workers would drive taxis for him. (one horse drojki).

Pinchos did not mingle in politics nor did he belong to any party. He was religious, but not fanatical—a typical Kamenetzer, who knew the value of modern education. His daughter Bella graduated from the Government High School while Charlotte showed a talent in drawing. This came in handy, when later in New York, Charlotte was the designer in the business she was in with her husband and her older sister. Pinchos managed to bring the family to New York in 1921, where he was in the grocery business the rest of his life.

The Kaplun Family



Itzek Kaplun's children killed by the Nazis together with the parents in Kamenetz-Podolsk, 1941.

Everybody in Kamenetz-Podolsk knew the "Moische Yoina" synagogue; this was originally the home of Kunia and Gisla Kaplun, which they rebuilt for a place of worship. Their children received traditional and very orthodox Jewish education. Later in life the children of Kunia supplemented their education with modern knowledge and became known for their organizational union work and for cultural activities. The tragedy of the Jewish people during the holocaust befell the Kapluns and took a terrible toll among them.

The oldest son Michael, his wife Rose and their two teen-aged daughters were murdered by the Nazis. Before his entire family was annihilated, Michael already had made a name for himself, as a social-democrat, Poale-Zionist. During the First World War he was among the organizers of a secret Yiddish school for refugees and of the Yiddish library.

Another son Izchek, with his wife and three young children were killed by the Nazis in Kamenetz-Podolsk. The third son Motia, an officer in the Red Army, was killed in a battle under Stalingrad. Motia's wife, an infant daughter, a sister Basia and a brother Joseph were saved by being evacuated deep into eastern Russia. But brother Simon spent four years in a concentration camp and now lives in Israel.

Morris Kaplun left Kamenetz-Podolsk after the First World War, lived in Poland and finally came to New York before the start of the Second World War.

Chaim Wolfenson



Chaim Wolfenson

Chaim was born in Kamenetz-Podolsk where he was married and brought up three sons and one daughter. Chaim received a Rabbinical degree, but did not choose to be a Rabbi. Like his brother Pinchos he had connections with a number of peasants from nearby villages; this helped him to be successful in running a flour mill and in his wood business. In Kamenetz-Podolsk heating of houses was done by burning wood. Chaim would buy from large estates parcels of forest and have the trees chopped into fire wood.

Unlike his brother Pinchos, Chaim was a Zionist and brought up his children in the Zionist spirit. This is the reason his son Isidore became enchanted with the idea of becoming a pioneer (Chalutz). Isidore joined a group which left Kamenetz-Podolsk in 1921 on the way to Palestine. Unfortunately, this group was stranded in Rumania for 2 years. When the Chalutzim were in port of Constanza ready to embark for Palestine, Isidore became sick and was left behind. Later he came to New York, but his family could not escape from Kamenetz-Podolsk till 1927. Chaim with his wife and three children could not get a visa to North America and settled in Argentina, where his family prospered.

After many years, Isidore, Charlotte and Bella Wolfson gave up their manufacturing business in New York and became owners of a nursing home in New Rochelle, where they still reside.

The Drachler Family

Zalman Hersch Drachler, the owner of the flour mill in Zavalia combined the best of a Chortkover Chosid with the fine qualities of the Haskalah and Zionism.

The Drachlers educated their children to love Zion. They proved that Zionism could be practiced in Palestine long before Israel was established.

Israel, the oldest brother, a leading educator, a Labor Zionist leader in Russia and the U.S., was a delegate to the first Zionist Congress in Basel. His two sons, Nachmen and Shloime, are prominent in the field of American and Jewish education.

Sister Chaya, at age 20, settled in Palestine in 1908. She was among the Hashomer group that organized Kfar Giladi, the first Kibbutz in Upper Galilee. Her sons and twelve grandchildren today live in Kibbutzim. Sister Dvorah, at age 17, came to Palestine to join Chaya in building Eretz Israel. Unfortunately, Dvorah, only 21, together with other pioneers died defending Tel Chai and perished alongside the great Zionist leader Joseph Trumpeldor who was killed by Arabs. Sarah, active in Moetzet Hapoalot, was a teacher in the childrens day school. Her son, Odet, is a founder of Kibbutz Rivivim. She was killed by the Arabs in 1936. Abraham, in the U.S. since 1910, was an ardent Zionist and his daughters Esther and Pauline were raised in the same spirit. Louis and Samuel were active in Zionist Youth groups. Samuel was one of the founders of the Zionist sport club "Maccabee" in Kamenetz-Podolsk. In America the brothers continued their Zionist work in the Labor Zionist Farband and on behalf of Israeli Bonds.



The Drachler Family
Zalman Hersch and Alta Drachler
Monument in
Tel Chai to
the fallen

Israel

Abraham

Sarah

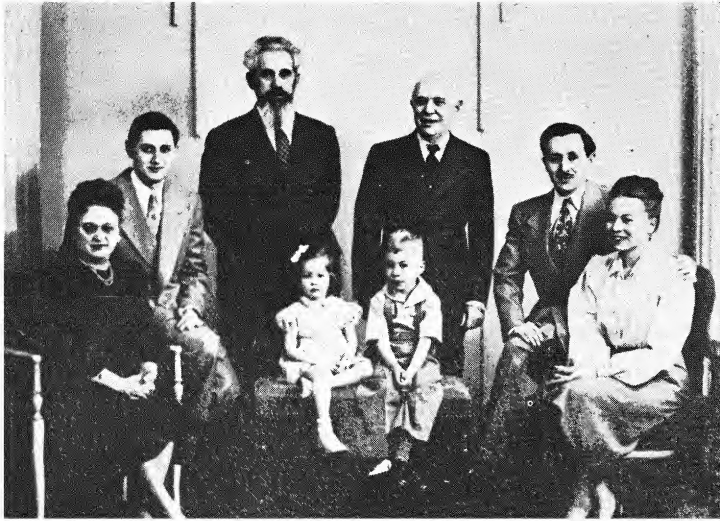
Dwora

Chaia

Louis

Samuel

Israel Drachler



Israel Drachler and family

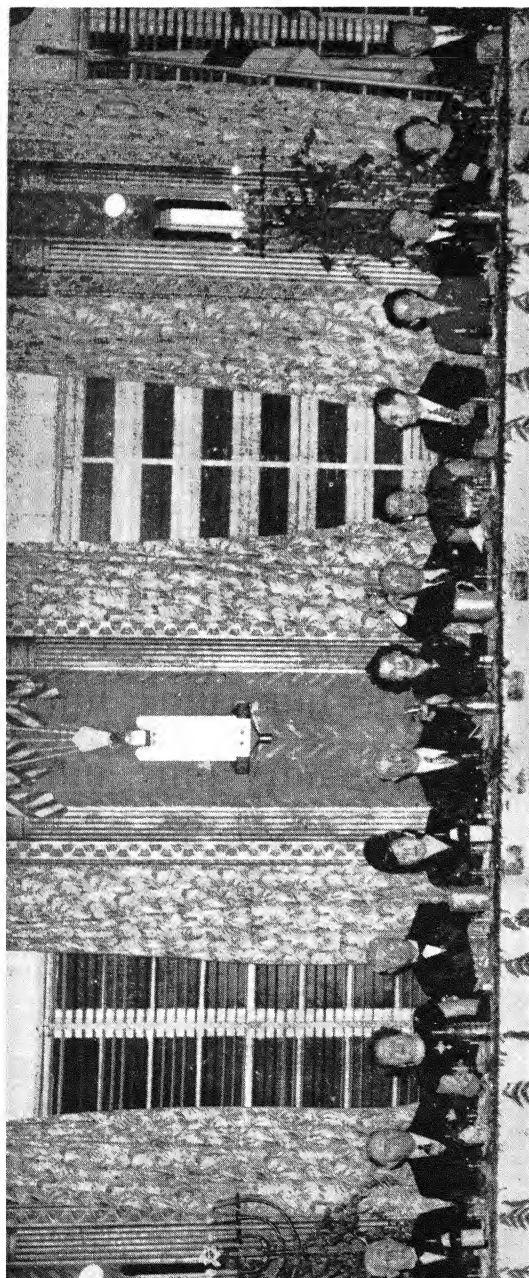
For almost 50 years in Russia and in America, Israel Drachler held an outstanding position as an educator and Labor Zionist leader.

As a young man, Israel was recognized among the Zionists of Kamenetz-Podolsk, whom he represented at country conferences and at World Zionist Congresses. Starting as a teacher in Zwanitz, Orinin, and in Kamenetz-Podolsk, Israel Drachler became the head of the Educational Department of Pinchos Krasny's Jewish Ministry in 1919.

During the First World War, Drachler was among the organizers of illegal Yiddish schools. All through the years, Israel Drachler was a contributor to Jewish publications in many lands. He also wrote short stories and poetry in Yiddish. Although a Zionist all his life, he left the general Zionist organization and became the leader of the Social Democratic Poale-Zion. On arrival in America, he again

became active in the more moderate American Labor Zionist movement.

Israel came first to Canada and in 1924 arrived in New York. In 1928, he was summoned to Detroit, where he was affiliated with the Scholem Aleichem School system. Until his death, Israel Drachler was active in the Jewish educational field in Detroit where at the same time, he took part in communal affairs. He also worked for the Labor Zionists' projects. His outstanding qualities as an educator were recognized by the Jewish community of Detroit. His sons follow in the father's footsteps by devoting their energies to the field of education. The older son, Norman is assistant superintendent of Detroit public schools after teaching in public and in Yiddish schools till he received his Ph.D in 1951. He is a member of the Labor Zionist Organization. The younger son, Sol is director of the Jewish Welfare Federation of Detroit after years of work in the Jewish educational field. As a youth he was active in Habanim and later was the founding President of branch No. 1 of the Labor Zionist Organization. Mrs. Rose Drachler, like her husband, started in Habanim to become active in chapter No. 2 of the Detroit "Pioneer Women," where she is the secretary.



The leaders of the "Kamenetz-Podolier Relief Organization" in New York in 1945

Benjamin Rosenblatt

In many respects the family of Benjamin Rosenblatt was typical among Kamenetzer at the turn of the century. Mr. and Mrs. Rosenblatt were brought up in very religious families, which were quite prosperous and strictly Chassidic.

Benjamin married the beautiful, 17 year-old Feigele Rudoy, who, besides a dowry, received from her rich father, a variety shop, which kept her financially independent through the years. Mr. Rudoy offered to take Benjamin into his hardware store, but the young Rosenblatt preferred to work with his father in the wholesale flour, dry fish, and oil business.

From the start, Feigele showed a liking for the better things in life: she fitted up her home with fine furniture, rugs and paintings; she wore well-tailored clothes of the latest style and jewelry to match. Although very religious, she, nevertheless, liked the theatre and opera; she was one of the first to join the Zionist organization and her home was open for meetings of the executive, even when the Zionists were forced underground. Her children received a good Jewish and general education. When the oldest daughter, Rebecca, was about to graduate the Marinskaia High School, Benjamin felt that it was time he was in business for himself.

His older brother and sister wrote to him from New York to come to America for a couple of years, where he could save enough money to start a business on his return to Kamenetz. Benjamin went to America and Feigele was able to provide and take care of her five children. In 1913 Benjamin asked Feigele to send the older two children, Rebecca and Sam to him, although he learned in no time that "The streets in New York are not paved with gold bricks." Feigele agreed, hoping that in America the daughter would go to college and 13 year-old Sam would have better opportunities.

Then the First World War and the Russian Revolution, for six long years, made it impossible for the Rosen-



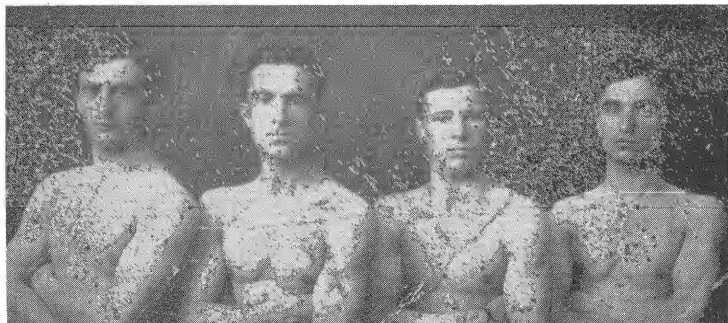
Benjamin Rosenblatt, before leaving Kamenetz-Podolsk for America with his wife and children, with his parents and sister

blatts in Kamenetz and for the part of the family in New York to hear from each other. Mail did not come from abroad. They lived in hope, eventually to be reunited. Meanwhile, Feigele continued in her store and brought up the three children remaining with her. The older daughter, Sophie, helped her run the store; the youngsters, Sylvia and Abraham, went to school daytimes and studied Hebrew at the Beth-Am in the evening. Sophie was interested in Zionism and was in an advanced group in the Beth-Am, the younger children joined the "Hatchia", a zionist youth organization.

Finally, in the spring of 1920 mail came from America. The rejoicing at the Rosenblatt home was overwhelming. At last they would be able to go to America and be with the husband and father, as well as the other two children. Benjamin wrote that everyone was well, Rebecca and Sam

had married and he sent money and visas with a “delegate” for them to come to New York. Preparations were started for Feigele and the children to leave Kamenetz as soon as the store and household were liquidated. A week before the departure date, Feigele contracted typhus and within 10 days died. The bereaved orphans later travelled to America where in the fall, they rejoined their father, brother and sister. After a couple of years, the girls were married and later, the younger son also started a family of his own. Benjamin shared the joys and sorrows of his children, but did not live to see even the Bar-Mitzva of his oldest grandson. In 1932 he died of pneumonia.

During the Second World War, the Nazis annihilated, among other Jews in Kamenetz-Podolsk, all the relatives of the Rosenblatts. The only ones remaining are a cousin, Jacob Bondar in Chabarovsk, Siberia, and an aunt, Chaitzia Rudoy and her children in Charkov.



A group of “Macabee, Jewish sport club” members in Kamenetz-Podolsk in 1919



A refugee from Kamenetz-Podolsk (father and child) before their escape from Russia into a D.P. camp in Germany in 1946



The children of Boris Jurist, a printer in Kamenetz-Podolsk, in Chernowitz in 1947 on the return from Eastern Russia to the destroyed home town



Goldberg from Kamenetz-Podolsk, who survived Belsen and came to Israel in 1948



Michael Neiser and family originally from Kamenetz-Podolsk, in Paris in 1948 on the way to Israel from a D.P. camp in Germany

